

An exploration of records management in cathedrals; three case studies

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Abstract

Aims and objectives

The research focused on the implementation of records management in cathedrals in the United Kingdom. The purpose was to provide recommendations for the cathedral and small private-based sectors in initiating successful organisational records management.

Methodology

A literature review was conducted for the first stage of the research. It aimed to establish best practice through the analysis of relevant sources, including principles, standards and guidelines. The empirical stage of the research sought to understand how records management is currently implemented in the sector through a cross-case analysis of three case studies selected from the cathedral field. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives in professional recordkeeping roles.

Findings

The case studies were depicted at varying stages of progression in the implementation of records management. They ranged in size and circumstances, but were shown to approach records management similarly in an ad hoc manner. The main variables identified as determining the success of records management include: systematic planning within a holistic framework of people, policy, procedures, technology and tools; strategic backing and financial support from the governing body of the cathedral; formalised recordkeeping systems to ensure the ongoing access and preservation of records in all formats; adequate staff resources to implement and monitor records management; delivery of the strategy through a variety of tools; and an understanding of the central user's requirements to promote information responsibility.

Conclusions and recommendations

The research concluded that implementation of a successful records management programme requires a strategic and systematic approach incorporating planning, design, implementation and monitoring to demonstrate that information serves a corporate purpose, that its relationship to performance can be shown and that it is empirically testable. It is advisable to formulate a strategy within a framework that encompasses an understanding of the legislative and regulatory environment; technological context; and information culture of an organisation, delivered through a range of processes, controls and tools.

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Abbreviations

All cases were represented in the interviews by members of staff responsible for the organisational archives of each individual cathedral. To maintain confidentiality, the individual interviewees and case studies were assigned code names. They are therefore referred to as the following:

Case study number	Case study code name	Interviewee number	Interviewee code name
Case study 1	CS1	Interviewee 1	I/1
Case study 2	CS2	Interviewee 2	I/2
Case study 3	CS3	Interviewee 3	I/3

Table 1: Code names assigned to case studies and interviewees

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 A brief introduction to the dissertation

The aim of this dissertation is to examine how records management is implemented in cathedrals within the United Kingdom. The successful operation of any organisation is dependent upon the effective management of records, regardless of their media. Records management programmes are vital to access, record, value and protect information. Without a formal and comprehensive programme, information is governed in a haphazard and largely meaningless way. This paper will gain an understanding of current best practice in records management in hybrid form, looking to other cathedrals and organisations, and professional guidelines and standards. It will ultimately provide recommendations in how to interpret, adapt and implement current records management guidelines and knowledge within small private-based organisations, such as the cathedral sector.

1.2 Rationale

Reasons for choosing this particular area to study as a dissertation topic derived from the need for efficient and effective solutions in the management of records throughout their lifecycle/continuum, in all media and formats. The publication of *Chapter and Verse: Care of Cathedral Records* (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013) was pivotal in forming initial research and guidance in records management within the cathedral sector. It was felt that the sector would benefit from more extensive research in this area, as it had been raised as a topic of concern within the cathedral community.

The dissertation seeks to provide an understanding of how effective available standards and guidelines are in delivering practical and theoretical recordkeeping solutions within the context of the current changing technological environment. IT advancements have challenged the profession significantly on a number of levels: to readdress the concept of the record; to implement efficient and user-friendly systems; and to define a new role for the profession. Further research is therefore vital to assist the cathedral sector in providing viable solutions to the challenges posed and ensuring the ongoing preservation and access of records. Although the research will focus specifically on the cathedral sector, the findings and recommendations will equally be applicable to other small private-based archival

establishments, which operate on the same scale and are governed by a similar regulatory framework.

1.3 Scope

The scope of this paper will examine a broad array of available standards, guidelines and literature. It will specifically focus upon the only publication regarding records management within the cathedral sector, *Chapter and Verse: Care of Cathedral Records* (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013), as well as the key international standard ISO 15489 and associated standards and current professional thinking. It is anticipated that the greatest limitation will be the restriction in time associated with writing and submitting a dissertation. It is also felt that the lack of existing research on records management specifically regarding cathedrals could restrict analysis and comparison of ideas of theorists in the field.

1.4 Aims

The aim of the dissertation is to ascertain how records management is implemented within cathedrals through an analysis of three case studies. It will ultimately provide recommendations for the cathedral and small private-based sectors to initiate successful organisational records management, through a number of interrelated objectives. It aims to further the existing research of this specific topic.

1.5 Objectives

The objectives of this paper are as follows:

1. To establish best practice in records management through an analysis of relevant literature including principles, standards and guidelines.
2. To gain an understanding of how records management is currently implemented within the sector.
3. To provide recommendations on how to design and implement effective policies and programmes in the management of records within an organisation, in all formats and media, throughout their lifecycle/continuum.

1.6 Methodology

To achieve the above objectives, the paper will be formulated from an analysis of relevant material on the subject of records management. Although there is limited literature specifically regarding the position of cathedrals and records management, a wider search into: the practice and mechanics of records management, relevant standards, and sources from inter-related information disciplines will be conducted. The analysis of this material will provide a framework of best practice.

Research will also consist of a practical exploration of three case studies, which will attempt to understand all aspects of the case studies individual approaches to records management. Likely questions will include how each individual organisation has approached records management through planning, design, implementation and monitoring.

The research will then be collated and analysed to provide recommendations on the necessary steps to be taken in records management for those responsible in overseeing the management of records within cathedrals or small organisations.

1.7 Definitions of records and records management

The concept of a record is an eluding premise with no universally accepted definition, due to multiple conferring opinions, which will be considered further in the literature review. Definitions are important to recordkeeping practitioners to communicate with others and for consistent practice and decision-making. For the purpose of this paper therefore the term record will be defined as:

Information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.
(ISO 15489-1, 2001, clause 3.15)

The term records management will be used with reference to:

The field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for

capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the for of records.

(ISO 15489-1, 2001, clause 3.16)

1.8 Structure of dissertation

The structure of the dissertation will firstly analyse available literature on the subject of records management (chapter 2). It will then provide a methodology regarding how the research has been applied (chapter 3). This will be followed by an analysis of the findings from three case studies (chapter 4). Recommendations on the necessary steps to be taken in records management will then be provided (chapter 5) and the overall study will be concluded (chapter 6).

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will look at various sources concerning the topic of implementing a records management programme within an organisation, such as the cathedral sector. It aims to provide an analysis of the views provided by theorists and the various standards and guidelines relating to records management, which will ultimately offer an understanding of best practice within the sector.

2.2 Literature search

Articles on the subject of organisational records management were found by undertaking searches within relevant databases such as LISA-Net. Search terms associated with records management, such as “records management” and “information management”, were used to obtain a number of hits. They were then sorted to find applicable journal articles. The articles were read and analysed with the view of developing an in-depth understanding of current professional standpoints on implementing records management within an organisation. Searches were also conducted through the internet search engine “Google” to source relevant literature available on the web. Again a similar search was conducted to find relevant hits.

The search for various sources was hindered by the fact that there is limited material produced on this specific topic. Additionally the topic covers many different components, as the implementation of records management can not focus solely upon one individual aspect of a programme, but has to provide a comprehensive overview of a number of different considerations. The author therefore had to search and source a broad array of relevant topics and publications.

2.3 The changing technological landscape

It can be argued that “the most vital strategic asset of any organisation is information” (Gable, 2013, p. 1). Organisations, including cathedrals, depend upon information to provide an institutional heritage, as well as to fulfil evidential requirements for legislative and accountability purposes and further to gain “considerable competitive benefits and overall improved performance” (Best, 2010, p. 64). How information is created, kept and managed

within any given organisation however, is a topic of uncertainty and continuing debate, due largely, but not exclusively to the challenges posed by rapid technological advancements.

Within the last twenty years, the recordkeeping profession¹ has re-invented itself, evolving from paper-based to electronic recordkeeping systems. The evidence of which, as articulated by Iacovino (2006) can be seen in: “the changing language and concepts, the recognition of related interdisciplinary research and knowledge, and the re-evaluation of recordkeeping theories and practices” (p. 1). This period of transition is still ongoing and concepts, processes and practices will require continuing refinement as a result of the advancements of new communication technologies (Iacovino, 2006). Associated ways and means in which we communicate and work on a daily basis have also shifted irrevocably: from “a hierarchical management system to a looser decentralised structure” (Hofman, 1998, p. 154) in which users are able to “create and access information from disparate locations” (Hofman, 1998, p. 154) and “various devices” (“Gartner says organisations”, 2013). Further “new technologies coupled with greater levels of access and interaction has led to an explosion of information” (McDonald and Leveille, 2014, p. 101) driven by a “collaborative user-led virtual revolution” (Stuart and Bromage, 2010, p. 217) in which “lines are inevitably blurred between the records of individuals, organisations and wider society” (Brown, 2014, p. 2). These factors have and will continue to have significant impact upon the recordkeeping profession. As Joseph and Goldschmidt (2012) argue, organisations are no longer able to control and maintain records within defined boundaries. It is now users who create organisational records from beyond the organisation’s boundaries. The prerogative of recordkeeping has thus shifted “from skilled records managers to individual knowledge workers” (Joseph and Goldschmidt, 2012, p. 61).

2.4 What constitutes as a record?

Records are a fundamental “subset” (Franks, 2013, p. 58) of information. There is little consensus amongst the recordkeeping community and broader information fields, on what exactly constitutes as a record or how the keeping of records relates to the management of information and records. Nevertheless it can be argued that definitions are important to establish a common professional language (Yeo, 2007 and 2008).

¹ The term *recordkeeping profession* will be used throughout this paper to describe records at any stage from creation to archive and with reference to all professionals, for example records managers and archivists, concerned with the management of records.

Some, most notably the post-custodial aligned theorists argue that all data, records and information are the same entity; “all are assets of an organisation and all need to be managed effectively” (Coleman, Lemieux, Stone, and Yeo, 2011, p. 122), achieved through understanding the wider “functional context” (Cook, 2007, p.406) of the “process of the record’s creation and contemporary use” (Cook, 2007, p. 411). In the UK the Information and Records Management Society (IRMS) define the information assets of an organisation as “*all* various records and information resources held by an organisation” (Information and Records Management Society (IRMS), 2011, para 1). Similarly recordkeeping legislation does not distinguish between records and information, for example the Data Protection Act 1998. It can therefore be surmised that organisations and legislative bodies are more concerned with the utility of the information to that organisation, than with defining factors of recordness; that is “not the shape, size, colour, or form of a record, but its content” (Bailey, 2007, p. 118).

In comparison other theorists draw a distinction between information and records, emphasising that while data and information may be changeable over time, records are stable and unchanging, possessing “sets of attributes... to suggest how records can be differentiated from other kinds of information” (Yeo, 2007, p. 327). Duranti asserts that a record only comes into existence when it has been set aside and put into relation with other records (Duranti, 1997). Duranti and other academics at the universities of Pittsburgh and British Columbia argue that to qualify as such, as paraphrased by Greene et al. (2004), records are created by business activities and are “by nature only evidence of activities and transactions, which must be demonstrably authentic (inviolable), reliable and complete” (p. 4). The stance accords with the definition supplied by the International Standard for Records Management ISO 15489-1 standard, which describes records as:

Information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. (ISO 15489-1, clause 3.15)

In this respect records are distinguished from the mass of information in which they are produced; records are the remnants of a business process transaction. The formal capture of records into an organised system can establish the essential qualities of records reliability,

authenticity, integrity, and usability (ISO 15489-1, 2001) and will “undoubtedly result in records of high quality” (Williams, 2014, p. 7). Such a stance can be interpreted as “restrictive” (McLeod, Childs and Heaford, 2007, p. 217) as it “excludes record formats such as diaries, maps, data in databases, information and most non-textual material produced as a result of a transaction or activity ” (Brown, 2014, p. 14). It further disregards archival records that are not maintained by their creating organisational body and importantly does not account for many records created in Web 2.0 technologies. Nevertheless the overall premise “assists in linking records assets to business functions thus giving the organisation a much improved understanding of its records” (Grimard and Page, 2004, p. 112).

2.5 Implementing records management

Records originating from functions or processes are kept together in a system i.e. a recordkeeping system and such a system functions as a tool for the user who needs to carry out processes and transactions. How this should be undertaken, although open to theoretical and practical debate, is best understood in terms of a structured methodology, thus “increasing the likelihood that information will be found and will be easily and accurately managed” (Benfell, 2002, p. 4).

The ISO 15489 standard provides a methodological framework for recordkeeping professionals based upon a number of requirements; planning, design, implementation and monitoring. It has been widely accepted as an influential and critical set of principles and guidelines: internationally it is endorsed by the United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) (Weinstein, 2005) and has been accepted and used as a best practice standard in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Jamaica, Australia and New Zealand (Alexander-Gooding and Black, 2005; An, 2006; Dherent, 2006, McLeod and Childs, 2007; Steemson, 2005; Weinstein, 2005). A Cohasset survey conducted in 2009 reported that 47 per cent of recordkeeping professionals cited the ISO 15489 as their primary source of guidance to determine their organisation’s records management requirements and practices (Williams and Ashley, 2009, p. 21). Case studies focusing upon the standard reflect the practical application of its principles, for example studies undertaken by McLeod and Childs, 2005 and Oliver, 2007.

Research suggests that most British users of the standard are focused on using it as a benchmarking (McLeod and Childs, 2007) or audit tool (Crockett and Foster, 2004). Organisations can benchmark their records management practice against ISO 15489 to identify strengths and weaknesses through “using the general statements of principles (particularly that records should possess authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability) as a yardstick to judge the evidential value of systems” (Tough and Moss, 2006, p. 19).

Nonetheless a concern has emerged that the ISO 15489-2 standard lacks practical guidance on developing or implementing the tools referred to in the standard (McLeod and Childs, 2007). It is not a how to guide or training manual (McLeod and Childs, 2007, p. 163) and in many respects “the contents of ISO 15489 are less important than its existence” (Healey, 2010, p. 101); used primarily because of “the need to demonstrate regulatory compliance, legal compliance and accountability” (McLeod, Childs and Heaford, 2007, p. 24). Further it fails to reflect the contemporary recordkeeping environment and wider technologically dominated society (Joseph et al, 2012). It is therefore best understood as a non-prescriptive reference tool supplemented by other literature and sources where required.

The format of the standard addresses the principles and requirements to assist organisations, both public and private, in the management of records, thus ensuring that they are adequately created, captured and managed. It covers:

The regulatory environment; policy and responsibilities; the principles of records management programmes; the design and implementation of records systems; records management processes and controls; monitoring and auditing; and training.
(Shepherd and West, 2003, p. 9)

The ISO 15489-2 is a technical report which sets out procedures that enable organisations to implement the principles using the DIRKS (Design and Implementation of Recordkeeping Systems) (National Archives of Australia, 2001) methodology.

2.6 Principles of records management

Looking at the various components of the standard in more detail, the principles of records management (ISO 15489-1, 2001, clause 7.1) form the basis upon which every records

management programme is built. They are generalised in nature based upon the unique circumstances of an organisation's size, legal environment and resources. As discussed previously, the main objective of a recordkeeping system is to ensure that the essential characteristics of a record (authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability (ISO 15489-1, 2001)) are maintained.

2.7 The regulatory environment

The regulatory environment encompasses records legislation, which emphasises the importance of keeping and maintaining records created in an appropriate and accountable manner. It is flexible enough to accommodate all manners of organisations, both in the national and international spheres, recognising that:

Business drivers in private and public enterprises are quite different and that various sectors have differing information and regulatory needs and widely varying business goals.

(McLean, 2002, p. 26)

With regards specifically to the cathedral sector “many cathedral activities are subject to external regulation, for instance in areas such as child protection and financial accounting” (The Cathedral Libraries and Archives Association and The Church of England Record Centre (CERC), 2013, p. 2), as well as overall governance from the Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011.

2.8 Policy and responsibilities

A records management policy can be characterised as:

A high-level statement that defines key terms, sets out the principles for the management of records created, captured and maintained by a business and stipulates the roles and responsibilities of all the relevant stakeholders.

(Coleman et al 2011, p. 182)

The policy should be aligned to “the parent organisation's mission and key organisational functions that need to be supported” (Yakel, 2000, p. 26). As available literature in the field

confirms, support of stakeholders and management is central to the implementation of the policy (Fuzeau, 2005; Shepherd and Yeo, 2003; and Williams, 2005). To adapt, promote, implement and enforce the framework, roles and responsibilities need to be assigned. It is recommended that “responsibilities should be assigned to all employees of the organisation” (ISO 15489-1, 2001, clause 6.3). It can therefore be understood that “users have to take responsibility for their information and some basic information management is an essential part of working in the digital age” (Budzak, 2014, p. 187).

2.9 The design and implementation of a recordkeeping system and records management processes and controls

The design and implementation of a recordkeeping system needs to account for all institutional records in all formats. Cumming emphasises the importance of “recordkeeping systems as the key requirement of ISO 15489” (Cumming, 2003, p. 3). Recordkeeping systems are operated through processes and controls, consisting of the following:

Capturing records into the records system; determining the records retention period; classifying records; storage and handling procedures; disposal of records; and documenting records management processes.

(Ismail and Jamaludin, 2009, p. 138)

Although the guidelines and principles of ISO 15489 remain relevant to the recordkeeping profession, a number of issues regarding the processes and controls should be considered within the context of the changing technological landscape. The standard is, in theory, broad enough to include records in any medium. It has been identified however, that it “does not address the unique issues of managing specifically electronic records” (Alexander-Gooding and Black, 2005, p. 65). As Shepherd and West (2003) point out the standard requires the compilation of archival metadata, but makes no explicit reference to identifying records metadata at the point of capture. Unlike paper records, electronic records do not carry intrinsic metadata in their structure and physical context. Metadata associated with electronic records has to be made explicit, as it is only through “participating in the very act of creation that the long-term preservation of the record is ensured” (Trance, 2002, p. 138). The *ISO: 23081 Metadata for Records* (parts 1 and 2) (International Organisation for Standardisation,

2006, 2007) assist in understanding metadata within the framework of ISO 15489 from both current records management and archival perspectives.

The ISO 15489 states that records need to be assigned a retention period “based on an analysis of the regulatory environment, business and accountability requirements and the risk of not capturing records” (ISO 15489-1, 2001, clause 9.1). To preserve valuable records, Millar argues that “as the creators of records are the ultimate decision makers, they are responsible for determining whether their agency’s records are kept or destroyed” (Millar, 1999, p. 60). Users therefore require specific guidance as to how long to retain the records that they produce. The *Chapter and Verse: Care of Cathedral Records* (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013) guide, offers the cathedral sector a single comprehensive retention schedule covering all legal and regulatory requirements of the jurisdiction in which it operates, as well as functional operational and business needs. It also provides general advice on the maintenance and preservation of both paper and electronic records.² The retention schedule needs to encompass all “records generated both in paper and electronic form to ensure that the vital work that cathedrals do is both supported now and for posterity” (The Church of England Records Centre, 2013, sect 2). Implementation of retention schedules is an issue, evidenced through the 2009 Cohasset survey, which reported that although 88 per cent of organisations had a retention schedule, only 65 per cent of organisations stated that electronic records were included in their retention schedule (Williams and Ashley, 2009, pp. 22-3).

The ISO 15489 standard states that “organisations should have formal guidelines regarding who is permitted to access the records and in what circumstances” (ISO 15489-1, 2001, clause 9.7). Security of records, specifically with regard to electronic records, is naturally compromised by and vulnerable to cyber attacks and purposeful or accidental loss of information and alterations. The ISO 27001 *Information Security Management Systems Requirements* (2005) is a best practice information security standard that assists in identifying organisational security risks and offers appropriate controls to be taken to reduce the risks. Lomas (2010) has identified that the ISO 27001 standard presents many of the practical answers for the development of information and records management systems

² Further records management advice for the Church of England constituencies can be found at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchcommissioners/church-administration/librariesandarchives/recordsmanagementguides.aspx>

regarding access, security and risk management and that when “aligned with the ISO 15489 standard, the delivery of records management systems is strengthened” (Lomas, 2010, p. 184).

2.10 Monitoring and auditing

The ISO 15489 standard recommends regular monitoring and auditing “to ensure that the records systems procedures and outcomes are being implemented according to the organisational policies and requirements” (ISO 15489-1, 2001, clause 10).

2.11 Training

Relevant research strongly suggests that systems put in place should be usable as possible achieved through, as Daum advocates “creating awareness and understanding amongst staff by training and implementing enabling technologies so employees will be personally motivated to undertake the required new practices” (Daum, 2007, p. 2). “In spite of extensive training however, most staff never get to grips with the system” (Maguire, 2005, p. 150).

A growing body of knowledge has examined records management from the perspective of the user (Bailey, 2008; Bailey and Vidyarthi, 2010; Curry and Moore, 2003; Foscarini, 2010; Joseph and Goldschmidt, 2012; Livari, Isomaki and Pekkola, 2009; Oliver, 2007; Oliver, 2008; Oliver and Foscarini, 2014; Sanders, 1998), which is noted as lacking from the ISO 15489 Standard (Lomas, 2010). Indeed the pre-eminent importance of the organisation is reflected above that of the user within every aspect of the standard, as Shepherd and Yeo (2003) acknowledge:

The starting point (when introducing any corporate system of RM) is usually the need to promote an awareness of records as a corporate resource and an understanding that they are not merely for personal use.

(p. 57)

Research conducted to ascertain “why records management often struggles to satisfy the requirements of the individual users that it relies upon ultimately for success” (Bailey and Vidyarthi, 2010, p. 282), identify that “a fundamental gap exists between what records management focused IT services can deliver and the expectations of users” (Livari, Isomaki

and Pekkola, 2009, p. 110). Thus demonstrating that the profession needs to better understand user expectations and capabilities, offering simple records management tools that are user, not system or organisationally biased, through an in depth understanding of “the information culture” (Oliver, 2008, p. 363).

Overall whilst analysis of human activity systems is an inherent aspect of records management, it should be considered as only one aspect of a comprehensive records management programme and understood within a holistic framework of “people, policy, procedures, technology and tools that create and sustain organisational records and recordkeeping” (Cumming, 2003, p. 3). Achieving this balance ultimately resides with the individual organisation and as Foscarini (2010) points out there is “no one solution to real-world problems and no one model that accounts for any and all of the solutions that can be encountered” (Foscarini, 2010, p. 397) when dealing with records management.

2.12 Summary

In summary the literature review demonstrates that organisational records management should be understood within a holistic framework of differing organisational priorities and implemented through a structured recordkeeping system to ensure that the essential qualities of a record: it’s reliability, authenticity, integrity, and usability, are maintained.

It explores the fundamental guidelines and principles detailed in the key international standard, ISO 15489, that assist practitioners in the planning, design, implementation and monitoring of records management within an organisation. The standard offers flexibility in how it is implemented internationally and across jurisdictions and industries, because as the review demonstrates, no one solution can be the same.

Best practice standards and guidelines in the recordkeeping profession are examined within the context of the changing technological environment, identifying challenges to the sector on a number of levels, to: present viable solutions for the processes and controls that are required to manage and maintain a recordkeeping system; to adequately represent the central users, “the knowledge workers” (Joseph and Goldschmidt, 2012, p. 61) of an organisation and to comprehend a more expansive view of the nature of a record, whilst maintaining the essential characteristics of a record. The professions’ response in struggling to determine viable solutions to the challenges posed are reflected in the ISO 15489 standard, which

although possesses marked advantages, as discussed, fails to provide guidance on current issues. Specialised guidance regarding electronic records is presented in alternative international standards, such as ISO 27001 and ISO 23081.

The only records management guide to be published, specifically regarding cathedral organisational records management, is the *Chapter and Verse: Care of Cathedral Records* guide. Limited research has been conducted previously to ascertain how cathedrals care for their current records. This paper therefore seeks to question how cathedrals implement records management within their organisations to assist the cathedral sector and small private-based organisations in dealing with their records management, which will ultimately stimulate further debate and research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology chapter will discuss the research methods used for this paper. It will begin with a justification for the choice of research approach. This will be followed by a description of the methods used, including the sampling techniques and data collection techniques. The reasons for the choice of methods will be discussed, followed by a consideration of ethical issues. There will be an examination of the framework used for data analysis and finally a look at the limitations and problems encountered whilst conducting the research.

As stated in the introductory chapter, the overall aim of this research is to ascertain how cathedrals can successfully implement organisational records management achieved through a number of interrelated objectives. The literature review (chapter 2) was conducted before the empirical stage of the study to establish best practice within the sector and to inform on the design of the research methodology. The empirical stage of the study will focus upon how records management is currently implemented within the sector, conducted through three case studies.

3.2 Justification and description of research method

The literature review demonstrated that due to the many differing factors of a comprehensive records management programme, no one solution is the same and that every solution should be considered within the context of its particular organisation. It further identified that organisational records management should be considered as a number of differing components within a holistic framework. For this study therefore, quantitative research was not suitable because the findings could not be generalised to the wider population and were less amenable to precise measurement or numerical interpretation. The research was instead designed using a qualitative research method, which was the most appropriate method because it facilitated the accumulation of in-depth findings of the interviewee's personal thoughts, feelings, experiences and expectations.

The research strategy chosen to implement the empirical research was a multiple case study, which involved a comparative analysis of three case studies. This approach was chosen as it

allowed the research to establish common and differentiating factors associated with the success of organisational records management and an overall deeper understanding of the social and organisational context of the cathedral sector. Bryman (2012, p. 72) states that “we can understand social phenomena better when they are compared in relation to two or more meaningfully contrasting cases or situations.”

It was hoped that a detailed study of three case studies would offer a telling case of records management for the wider cathedral community. Such insights would not have been revealed using a quantitative research design that took a survey approach with large numbers of participants. Denscombe (2003, p. 30) argued that “what a case study can do that a survey normally cannot, is to study things in detail.” The case study approach allowed the author to explore a deeper analysis of how the cases had implemented records management, rather than simply identifying what they had done, through a range of evidential sources including: “interviews, documents, artefacts and observations” (Yin, 2009, p. 54). The specific cases were chosen to provide such information because they were recognised as having made significant steps with records management and/or having reputable experience and knowledge in the area of records management within the cathedral sector and wider archives and records management communities.

Overall the chosen method facilitated the application of the study and accurately represented the findings. Alternative research methods such as surveys, experimental research, historical research and ethnographies would not have sufficiently fulfilled the aims and objectives of the design brief because they would not have achieved the desired detailed, qualitative results. As Bell (1999) states:

Methods are selected because they will provide the data that you require to produce a complete piece of research. Decisions have to be made about what methods are best for particular purposes.

(p. 101)

3.3 Data collection methods

3.3.1 Interviews

The main data technique for the empirical stage of the study was semi-structured interviews. Yin (2003, cited by Biggam, 2011) states that:

Interviews are essential sources of case study information, principally because most case studies are human affairs and that interviews can provide insights into complex situations. (p. 227)

Although certain limitations have been identified from this particular data technique, for instance, it is time consuming and can cause participants “to respond in a way that they perceive to be socially acceptable” (Bond, 2006, p. 202), interviews were appropriate to this study because they accommodated in-depth discussion and observation within a focused framework.

The interviews were structured using questions prepared beforehand in order to establish a framework. The framework allowed for flexibility of the pre-determined schedule, depending upon the responsiveness and willingness of the interviewees. This was achieved through the use of open-ended questions. Pickard (2013, p. 219) defines open-ended questions as “essentially descriptive questions that require a more detailed and personal response.” The emphasis was on how the interviewees understood the issues and what they viewed as important. The interview schedule was structured according to the methodological framework set out by the ISO 15489 standard that incorporates requirements in planning, design, implementation and monitoring. Following a pilot run of the interview, a number of minor changes were made to the questions to clarify their meanings.

In each case study a representative employee working in a recordkeeping role was interviewed. The aim of the interviews was to gain an overall view of records management within the cathedral sector to contribute to an understanding of the current records management environment from the perspectives of the interviewees to ultimately further the professions knowledge, understanding and profile. Notes were taken during the interviews, the length of which ranged between 31 and 42 minutes. The interviews were recorded for the

second two interviews, after the interviewees had given their consent, as it was felt that that this data collection method provided more data-rich findings than simply making notes of the interviews. The first two interviews were in person and the third interview was conducted over the telephone. The author acknowledges that the inconsistent means in which the data was collected could marginally impact upon the overall findings. However implementation of the research accommodated the requirements of the interviewees and was undertaken with what resources were to hand. As Bryman states “when doing projects, students clearly need to do their research with very limited resources” (Bryman, 2012, p. 181). Once all of the findings had been gathered and transcribed the data was sent out to the interviewees, upon request, to collect further comments, which was then added to the overall findings. The interview questions and explanation of the interview schedule are presented in appendices A and B.

3.3.2 Sampling techniques

The study employed two sampling techniques. Initially the snowballing technique was used; contact was made with key informants who in turn suggested data-rich cases. This resulted in securing two key case studies. The research method had been designed with the purpose of analysing three case studies. To secure the third case, convenience sampling was used, which produced a case with consideration of geographical distance. Convenience sampling can be viewed as an inappropriate sampling method because of the evident potential for bias (Gorman and Clayton, 2005), it does however “provide a springboard for further research and links to be forged with existing findings in an area” (Bryman, 2012, p. 202). To minimise any disputes of bias, proactive measures were taken, as outlined in section 3.6.3. Overall the chosen sample is appropriate to the nature and output of the research because it represents cases that provide a detailed insight into the research topic.

3.4 Ethical issues

The ethical framework for this paper is guided by Aberystwyth University’s Policies for Ethical Practice in Research and The Department of Information Studies Ethics Policy for Research, which are based on The Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association (BSA). Additionally professional ethical guidelines were followed from The Code of Conduct set out by The Archive and Records Association (ARA).

Informed consent was obtained by briefing the interviewees as to why the study was taking place and what it would involve prior to the interviews (see appendices C and D for copies of the consent form and accompanying letter). Pickard states that informed consent means that the participants “understand what they are agreeing to, accept what is being asked of them and are comfortable with the purpose of the research and the intended use of the data they are providing” (Pickard, 2013, pp. 89-90). Confidentiality was maintained throughout the process. Steps were taken to ensure that the data generated from the findings was made anonymous by covering up the identities where necessary. Participants were made aware that anonymity could not be guaranteed because of the small sample size and niche domain of the cathedral community, which could potentially risk the exposure of their identities. Additionally the findings were kept in a secure location and only accessed by the author. They were destroyed on completion of the study. Debriefing took place following the interviews, which consisted of recapping the interview to the interviewees and following up any further questions that the interviewees had in relation to the process. A copy of the transcript was made available to each case study, upon request, after the completion of the interviews.

3.5 Framework for data analysis

The interviews were structured in a thematic approach based upon the methodological framework set out by the ISO 15489 records management standard, incorporating requirements in planning, design, implementation and monitoring. Bryman (2012) identifies a theme as:

- A category identified by the analyst through his/her data;
- that relates to his/her research;
- that builds on codes identified in transcripts;
- and that provides the researcher with the basis for a theoretical understanding of his or her data that can make a theoretical contribution to the literature relating to the research focus.

(p. 580)

Under each theme, interviewees were asked a number of questions. The content of the questions derived from the first objective of the research:

- To establish best practice in records management through an analysis of relevant literature including principles, standards and guidelines.

The questions were designed to fulfil the second objective of the research:

- To gain an understanding of how records management is currently implemented within the sector.

The above two objectives contributed to the completion of the final objective:

- To provide recommendations on how to design and implement effective policies and programmes in the management of records within an organisation, in all formats and media, throughout their lifecycle/continuum.

All of the objectives contributed to the overall aim of the research:

- To understand how records management is implemented in cathedrals, to ultimately provide recommendations for the cathedral and small private-based sectors to initiate successful organisational records management.

The approach adopted to analyse the data from the case studies followed a process of collection, description, analysis, interpretation and comparison (see figure 1). It was conducted in a non-linear approach, as qualitative data requires a holistic understanding when identifying emerging themes and patterns, by the researcher who functioned as the information processor.

Qualitative data analysis process for cathedral case studies

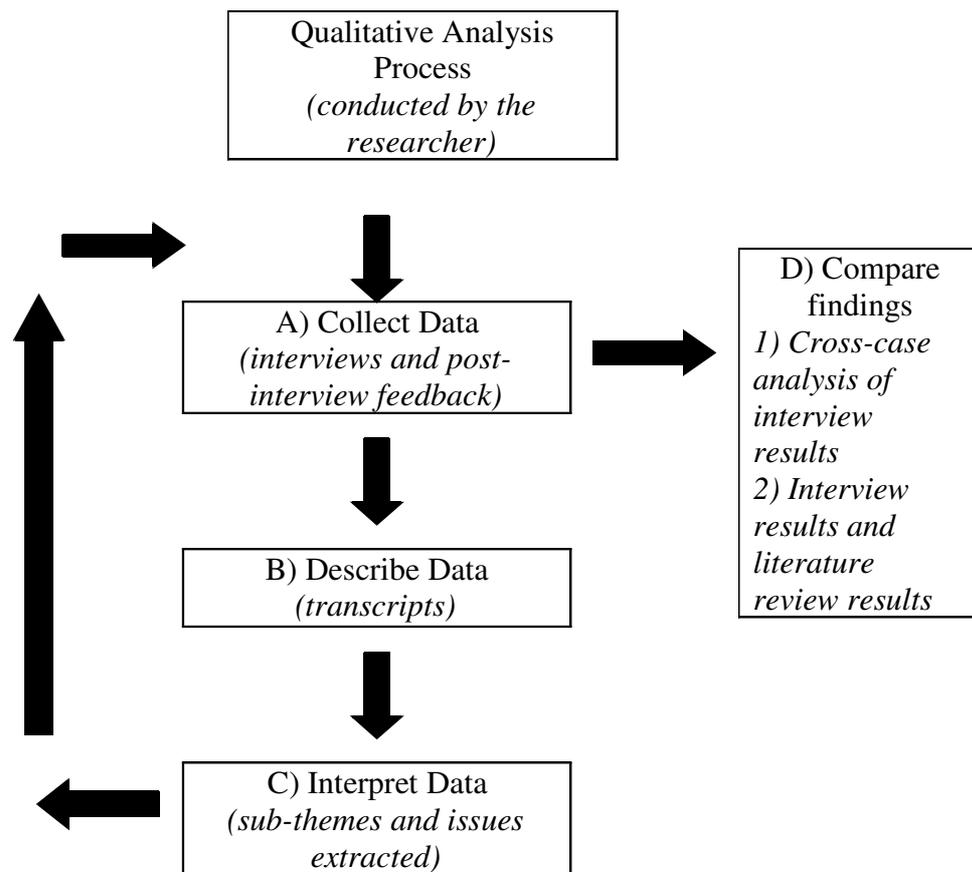


Figure 1: *Qualitative data analysis process for cathedral case studies.*

Adapted from the Qualitative data analysis process for Inverclyde University case study (Biggam, 2011, p. 235).

The researcher collated the data from cases 1 to 3 (A). On completion of the interviews, the interview and observational notes were transcribed. Any added feedback from the interviewees was also added to the overall findings (B). The data was broken down into themed subsets from which emerging issues were extracted, identified through codes (C). Two analyses were then performed: a cross-case analysis of the results provided by each interviewee, including the interview findings and documentary evidence and a comparison of the interview results and the literature review results (D).

The described qualitative analysis process was based upon a thematic approach, as previously mentioned. Qualitative research supports the emergence of themes or categories from the raw data over establishing a set theory prior to the analysis process. When tentative themes and issues had been established from the data, the researcher systematically compared and contrasted the case study findings against one and other and the literature

review. Appendix E illustrates a case analysis detailing a break down of themes and sub-themes. Appendix F presents an extract of a case transcript, which is broken down thematically and assigned specific codes.

This framework for data analysis reflects accepted practice for dealing with qualitative data. Bogden and Biklen (1982, cited by Biggam, 2011) describe it as:

Working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you tell others.

(p. 236)

3.6 Limitations and potential problems

Limitations and potential problems with the research included issues of validity, reliability and potential bias.

3.6.1 Validity

Validity is “concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research” (Bryman, 2012, p. 53). It focuses upon the creditability of an account, explanation or interpretation. It can be argued that the case study approach is not representative of the wider population and therefore can not yield findings that are applicable to further cases. Case study research however does not purport to support the generalisation of findings, it instead aims to provide generalisations of emerging theories. As Pickard (2013, p. 109) states “case studies are not intended to produce generalisations, they are intended to allow for transferability of findings based on contextual applicability.”

Data triangulation was incorporated in the study, which consisted of analysing different sources of information in order to increase the validity of the findings.

The case study research method is an extensively tried and tested research method, which further strengthens the validity of this research.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability demonstrates that the operation of a study can be repeated with the same results. Yin (2009) points out that standards used in the conduct of case study research are variable, particularly in the development of case study protocols or plans of analysis. Careful recordkeeping and appropriate data collection methods strengthen a study's ability to be replicable in further studies. An audit trail, or what Yin (2009, p. 186) refers to as "the chain of evidence; explicit links between the questions asked, the data collected and the conclusions drawn", was maintained throughout this research. The listed appendices (Appendices E and F) and figure (figure 1) demonstrate how and why the research data was collected.

A multiple case study design allows the findings to be replicated across cases; hence the evidence from multiple case studies is perceived as more compelling than that of its single case counterpart. Overall confirmation of the research method as a trusted study is therefore enhanced.

3.6.3 Potential bias

Critics frequently dismiss qualitative studies as biased and subjective, with a tendency for researchers to confirm their preconceived notions. The researcher can work to control bias through establishing trustworthiness within a study. Limiting investigator bias in this particular study was conducted through the following steps:

- Acknowledging the dual role of the author as both researcher and practitioner.
- Frequent debriefing sessions between the researcher and her professional peers to allow ideas and interpretations to develop and be tested.
- Checking the accuracy of the interview transcriptions with the interviewees after completion of the cases.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has provided an outline and justification of the chosen case study research strategy. It has described the methodology utilised to collect and analyse the findings. It has looked at the ethics and limitations involved with research such as this. The findings and discussion will be presented in the proceeding chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will firstly provide an overview of the background information of each case. This will be followed by a study of the documentary evidence. A cross-case analysis of the interview findings will then be discussed in relation to the literature review (chapter 2), proceeded by a summary of the findings.

The findings are presented thematically based upon the interview schedule questions derived from the methodological framework set out by the ISO 15489 standard and the sub-themes which emerged from the interview findings, as discussed previously in chapter 3. The following themes and sub-themes will therefore comprise the format for the presentation and discussion of the findings:

Theme 1: Planning and design

- Standards
- Guidelines
- Alternative sources of help
- Organisational approach

Theme 2: Implementation

- Policy
- Roles and responsibility
- Implementation of record systems
- Implementation of electronic record systems

Theme 3: Monitoring

- Review of records management
- Feedback from users
- Problems/issues
- Overall success of records management

Theme 4: Further considerations

- Cathedrals as businesses
- Financing records management
- Collaboration with other cathedrals and the wider religious archives community

4.2 Background information

This section will examine the broad context in which CS1-3 operate. Background information to the case studies was sought from the cathedral's respective websites³ and representative interviewees, enabling the research to gain a deeper understanding of the cases contextual variables.

The organisational composition of cathedrals is led by a governing body, referred to either as the Dean and Chapter or Dean and Canons. They are responsible for providing strategic leadership and direction. Non-liturgical aspects of cathedral management are overseen by a position known as the Chapter Clerk, Canon Steward or Receiver General. The legal entity of cathedral life is governed by both internal legislation, for instance cathedral statutes, and national legislation. Advice is further followed by certain statutory independent bodies, for example the Fabric Advisory Committee and the Finance Committee.

Cathedrals are responsible for a wide remit of functions, notably the care, maintenance and enhancement of the building fabric, the management of any lands and endowments which support their work, as well as the central duties of facilitating services and educational work. The main revenue stream of many cathedrals is as a visitor attraction and cultural focal point. They can therefore be considered as substantial corporate bodies, whose mission, although first and foremost is to serve Christian worship, is underpinned by legislation and business practices.

The next section will present a summary of background information regarding the organisation and state of recordkeeping for each case concerned.

³ Reference details can be supplied on request

4.2.1 Background information: CS1

As quoted in a published strategy (2013-18) annually CS1 attracts 350,000 visitors and 70,000 people to its services. It is supported by 450 volunteers and 60 employees, requiring an annual expenditure of £2.2 million. It employs 1 part-time staff member who is responsible for the archives and is assisted by 11 volunteers. CS1 was selected as a case study because, although it has taken only rudimentary steps in records management, it was thought to be a potential source of data due to the interviewee's previous experiences in records management. Geographical convenience was also a consideration in this selection.

4.2.2 Background information: CS2

CS2 employs 367 staff, of which 10 staff members work in the library and archives department on full-time, part-time and casual contracts. There are around 600 volunteers who assist in the cathedral and roughly 25 volunteers who assist specifically in the library and archives department. The library and archives holds a broad range of materials including parish, diocesan and city archives, and thus has a high usage and requires higher staffing levels in comparison to many other cathedrals.

1/2 and an additional staff member were tasked by the Receiver General of the cathedral to complete a records management project funded by CS2. On completion they aim to have compiled a records management policy and necessary guidelines, and implemented records management systems and procedures in conjunction with a final progress report. CS3 was selected as a case study because it is taking focused action in records management. The experiences which it has encountered could enlighten the sector's understanding on the topic.

4.2.3 Background information: CS3

Unlike CS1 and CS2, CS3 is a "Royal Peculiar" meaning that it is exempt from the jurisdiction of the diocese in which it lies and subject to the direct responsibility of the monarch. It employs 40 staff members and is assisted by approximately 265 volunteers. The archives department is made up of 2 full time staff, 1 trainee and 8 volunteers. Records management systems, procedures and policies were implemented in 2001 and thereafter approved by the Dean and Canons, under the direction of the interviewee's predecessor. Initiating and maintaining the changes to working practices, however has proved

problematic. CS3 therefore serves as a case to highlight potential challenges when implementing records management and to consider how such issues can be overcome.

4.3 Documentary evidence

Alongside the interviews, organisational documents were analysed to gain an insight into organisational records management policies and instructions. Copies of recordkeeping instructions, include a records management schedule and records management guidelines (applicable to current and semi-current records in paper format) from CS3. A records management policy was also supplied by CS3. An interim digital preservation policy, formulated by a student as part of their MSc Econ in information studies, was supplied by CS2 and completed the documentary analysis. The records management documents of CS1 were still in the early stages of planning, so were therefore not available for analysis. The documentary data comprised of 20 pages in total. The summary of the documentary data analysed for this study is presented in table 2.

Case study	Supporting organisational documentation	Main themes of research				Page Numbers
		Planning and design	Implementation	Monitoring	Further considerations	
CS1	-	-	-	-	-	-
CS2	<i>Interim digital preservation policy</i> (July 2014)	Designed to support preservation and access of digital assets (electronic records only)	Measures outlined to reduce the risk of losing digital assets	No fixed time span given (depends upon financial resources)	Findings could support a practical collaboration in digital preservation in the cathedral sector (Appendix D, theme 4c)	13 pages
CS3	<i>Retention schedule for records management</i> (2001)	Details long-term action plan in dealing with the disposal and transfer of records (paper records only)	As described in planning and design	Not stated	Not applicable	4 pages
	<i>Records management policy</i> (2001)	Specifies the requirements of how employees are expected to care for their records based upon the guidance presented in ISO 15489 (paper records only)	As described in planning and design	Not stated	Not applicable	1 page
	<i>Records management guidelines (applicable to current and semi-current records)</i> (July, 2001)	Not applicable	Outlines best practice in the creation, storage and disposal/transfer of current and semi-current records (paper records only)	Not stated	Not applicable	3 pages
						Total 20 pages

Table 2: Summary of supporting documentary data used to answer the research questions

4.4 Planning and design

4.4.1 Standards

Standards have heavily informed both the literature review and research format for this study. The ISO 15489 standard in particular was evidenced as overall a widely accepted and influential set of guidelines and principles that is particularly helpful when utilised as a benchmarking (McLeod and Childs, 2007) or audit tool (Crockett and Foster, 2004). The cases study findings deviate from this understanding demonstrating that the interviewees do not utilise standards and instead rely on alternative sources.

4.4.2 Guidelines

The *Chapter and Verse: Care of Cathedral Records* (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013) guide is shown to be the predominant source of help to the interviewees. All interviewees find, as encapsulated by I/1 that:

It is extremely useful to have a Church of England publication concerning records management. (I/1)

The comprehensive retention schedule was revealed from the findings to be the most useful aspect of the guide. Points for further consideration were raised by I/2 who made the following remarks regarding the guide:

It was helpful, but cathedrals vary so much that there is a lack of detail and practical guidance. (I/2)

More hold your hand guidance would be useful. (I/2)

It is therefore demonstrated that whilst a fundamental gap in the literature has been fulfilled with the publication of the cathedral guide, further research and simplified guidelines are still required to assist practitioners in the delivery of records management.

4.4.3 Alternative sources of help

The interviewees utilise a variety of alternative sources of help. I/1 and I/3 rely heavily upon their own experiences in previous records management roles. I/1 frequently refers to legislation such as the Data Protection Act regarding the rights of individuals. I/3 additionally refers to records management texts (Penn, Pennix and Coulson, 1994 and Shepherd and Yeo, 2003).

Specifically regarding retention scheduling, I/3 turns to examples of retention schedules from other organisations, for instance, the retention schedule provided by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Info Net (n.d.) website for university archives. I/3 also consults the National Archives online resources (n.d.) and The Church of England records management guides (The Church of England Record Centre, 2015). I/2 seeks guidance from the local public record office and staff members of The Church of England Record Centre.

4.4.4 Organisational approach

CS1 intends to implement the life cycle approach to records management undertaken through the assessment of current, semi-current or archival records, representing three distinct records phases and a clear divide between records management and archives. Such an approach can be viewed as incompatible with the management of electronic records because records created in the digital sphere are fluid and transient in nature, thus appraised on contextual factors rather than defining characteristics of recordness (Bailey, 2007). Consideration therefore should particularly be paid to developing systems to protect electronic records.

CS2 and CS3 approach records management on an ad hoc basis when time allows, but intend to introduce more formalised systems. The literature review concluded that capturing records into an organised system that is adaptable to the competing priorities of an organisation denotes that records remain authoritative and of high quality (Best, 2010; Duranti, 1997; Grimard and Page, 2004; Williams, 2014). Trance (2002) and Shepherd and West (2003) surmise that records need to be captured at the very point of creation to ensure the long-term preservation of the record. Planning from the outset is thus essential to establish: how a record will be defined; what format it will be in; whether it pertains research or historical

value; how it will be captured and arranged in an organised system; and how it will be managed and maintained over time. The ISO 15489 provides a benchmarking tool (McLeod and Childs, 2007) from which organisations can establish the essential qualities of a record, ensuring that all records have authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability (ISO 15489, 2001).

4.5 Implementation

4.5.1 Policy

I/1 stated that they intended to produce a policy to be adapted by the Dean and Chapter. Importantly the interviewee made the significant point that:

They [the Dean and Chapter] need to know the procedures in place and everybody else needs to know that it has a degree of authority. (I/1)

I/2 is in the process of compiling the final draft of their policy to be presented to the Dean and Canons for approval, alongside the final report of their records management project. CS3 possesses an organisational policy, which was formulated in 2001 and agreed by the ruling body of the cathedral. The findings concur with available literature in the field, which cite support of relevant stakeholders and management as vital to the implementation of a records management policy (Fuzeau, 2005; Shepherd and Yeo, 2003 and Williams, 2005).

4.5.2 Roles and responsibility

Literature in the field shows information in the digital age to be “a vital strategic asset” (Gable, 2013, p. 1) that necessitates users to take “basic information management” (Budzak, 2014) for. The ISO 15489 standard encourages roles and responsibilities to be assigned to all staff stipulating individual responsibilities, as it is only through clear devolution of roles and responsibilities that a framework for records management can be fully enforced and implemented.

The archivist in conjunction with the Chapter Steward is responsible for records management at CS1. I/1 stated that the archivist is not represented on the Senior

Management team and is thus less able to influence the strategic direction and decision making of records management.

The formal practice in the management of organisational records for CS2 was instigated by the Receiver General and the Dean and Canons, who tasked the archives department with compiling the necessary policies and guidelines. Overall responsibility for records management is unclear, as the following quote illustrates:

I wouldn't want to say that we are responsible completely for records management per se because I think we don't want to be intrusive and say that you have to do it in this way.
(I/2)

Ambiguous lines of responsibility are similarly shared by CS3; whilst the records management policy issues overall responsibility of records management to the Chapter Clerk, the interviewee stated:

We haven't got anybody who is ultimately responsible. (I/3)

All three case study findings stress the importance of assigning a representative employee from every department to take overall responsibility for records management within their department. I/3 advises to:

Identify somebody in each department who is responsible for records management and will take some kind of responsibility and then maybe getting rid of some of the backlog so that the system gets going on a more regular basis. (I/3)

4.5.3 Implementation of recordkeeping systems

A number of processes and controls are required to operate recordkeeping systems. I/1 explained that rudimentary procedures were in place for receiving documents from the cathedral architect. Their expectations for the implementation of record systems in all formats include the completion of the following actions, to conduct a records survey:

To identify what has been created, what is retained and what is vital. (I/1)

As well as to develop a retention schedule department by department and to perform a detailed analysis of records that require disposition, and records that require transfer to the archives, where an interim store is designated for the hold of modern records. Organising records in a shared filing structure:

Will ultimately mean that there is one series [of records] which everybody can access, rather than everybody having their own individual series. (I/1)

To undertake the processes significant investment in personnel resources will be required, as CS1 currently employs only one archivist on a part-time basis.

CS2 has completed the records survey and retention schedule. The retention schedule was compiled by undertaking a detailed analysis of the organisation's departments. Once the retention schedule is in place, it is hoped that the departments will follow the framework without it significantly impinging upon their day-to-day work. The records management policy is also in the final stages of completion.

As discussed previously, CS3 has the necessary framework in place, but it has not been reinforced and updated as necessary. It is therefore not adhered to by staff members and can not be considered as an organisational priority. It attributes the failing of the framework, to a lack of personnel and time to assist in the implementation. In 2015 it plans to investigate the records of one department at a time by appraising the current and semi-current records in both paper and electronic form. It is motivated by a need to create more space, which it is currently lacking in. The plan is backed by the Canon Steward to implement the said procedures.

Lack of storage space was identified in the findings as a preoccupation of the interviewees. The following processes and measures are evidenced as reducing back-logs of obsolete records:

- Establish the format in which records are created at the point of creation.

- Formalise the format of records to reduce duplication, most especially between paper and electronic records. A record can therefore be established as authentic.
- Implement consistent retention procedures.
- Implement consistent disposal and archiving procedures.
- Designate an interim store for records which are not consulted on a regular basis, but are still required for access.

4.5.4 Implementation of electronic recordkeeping systems

Limited steps have been taken with regards to the implementation of electronic record systems by all three cases. The interviewees acknowledge that a strategy needs to be formed in order to protect vital records from being lost or destroyed, but this does not correspond with the systems that are currently in place, as they do not fully encompass electronic records. Practical yet inexpensive steps in managing electronic records have been identified (Church of England Record Centre, 2013a). A suggestion made by CS2 in the pursuit of a solution to facilitate digital preservation is proactive collaboration amongst the cathedral community. CS2 has accumulated background research in digital preservation; an information studies student used CS2 as a case to explore how their digital assets and resources could be better managed (see table 2). Findings gleaned from the study identify the following points of consideration:

- Preparations to ensure the long-term preservation of all records require to be implemented at the very act of creation. Metadata associated with electronic records has to be made explicit at this point, as it is only through “participating in the very act of creation that the long-term preservation of the record is ensured” (Trance, 2002, p. 138). Vital records that have to be retained for a specific length of time should be prioritised.
- Portable devices, such as CD – ROMS, DVDs and USB drives are not intended for the long-term storage or preservation of digital records.
- Records that are stored on an organisation’s network can be backed up and in most cases are retrievable if accidentally deleted or in the case of system failure.
- If using new technology such as “cloud computing” investigate the company fully and any associated risks with storing information in such a manner.
- Information that is not migrated from one system to another is at risk of obsolescence as equipment and/or software is quickly outdated.

Objectives of CS2 that are yet to be achieved include:

- The preparation of practical guidelines on managing emails and electronic files.
- To jointly with the IT department make changes to the storage of electronic files; to introduce image management software; and to use shared drives appropriately.
- Encourage the use of shared email inboxes and outboxes for each department.
- To publish minutes and agendas on the organisation intranet instead of circulating them via email.
- Ensure the transfer of electronic records is in a format compatible with the software of the organisation. (I/2)

Records created and shared on personal devices will not be covered in the remit of CS2. These types of records will instead be left to the IT department because they were advised by the IT personnel that this is a difficult area to manage (I/2). I/3 also advises to:

Get the IT advisor, not only on board but in the driving seat, when it comes to ensuring that people manage their electronic records. (I/3)

A recordkeeping system is evidenced as an integral tool to organisations in managing information and records (Cumming, 2003). Yet unprecedented technological advancements in communication and working practices have forged a fundamental gap between the expectations of users and capabilities of recordkeeping systems (Livari, Isomaki and Pekkola, 2009). Recordkeeping systems have yet to reach a stage of seamless integration with organisational outcome and delivery, in terms of maintaining and accessing records in a simple and efficient manner, and necessitate further research and refinement. Collaboration with the IT department will assist in jointly tackling the challenges posed by electronic records, as alluded to by Iacovano (2006) who articulated the importance of recognising related interdisciplinary research and knowledge.

Although not referred to in the interview findings, further integral processes in records management require records to be stored appropriately in line with sector best-practice (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013b and 2013c) and to be managed securely thereby

preventing unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal and ensuring that the integrity of records is maintained (ISO 15489, 2001 and ISO 27001, 2005). Providing adequate protection additionally fulfils the business requirements of internal and external audit.

4.6 Monitoring

4.6.1 Review of records management

The ISO 15489 standard recommends regular monitoring and auditing “to ensure that the records systems procedures and outcomes are being implemented according to the organisational policies and requirements” (ISO 15489-1, 2001, clause 10). Best (2010) advocates monitoring procedures and outcomes through “defined but adaptable limits” (p. 65), as organisations and people are essentially dynamic and changeable entities.

I/1 believes that annual monitoring of organisational records management would be a starting point (I/1). I/2 stated that they intend to conduct a formal review every three years (I/2). From 2001, CS3 have conducted an annual review, the results of which are reported to the annual committee meetings.

The findings consistently suggest that reductions in storage space are one indicator as a measure of progress in records management, as the following quotation illustrates:

At the moment our servers are full of data which doesn't really need to be there, so reduction in size of storage in both paper and electronic records would be an evidence of success. (I/3)

All interviewees additionally make reference to legislative compliance and accountability. “Ease of access and traceability” (I/2) is also identified as an important measure, as a formal recordkeeping system increases “the likelihood that information will be found and will be easily and accurately managed” (Benfell, 2002, p. 4).

4.6.2 Feedback from users

As well as focusing upon organisational needs when implementing records management, a significant body of research has demonstrated a need for the profession to fundamentally realign itself to the user's perspective, the "knowledge workers" (Joseph and Goldschmidt, 2012, p. 61) of an organisation, who primarily influence the context of records creation and use in terms of, for example, information sharing behaviours, values attached to records and organisational commitment to records management.

I/2 expected staff members to find the records management actions intrusive, but instead found that:

Colleagues across the organisation really valued the help and advice. (I/2)

I/2 anticipated a degree of defensiveness however and consequently acted with caution, particularly regarding records created by the Dean and Canons, because of the often personalised nature that records of the clergy embody. As the following quotation explains:

The records management policy says that information is the property of the organisation and should be treated as such. This is difficult to apply to the clergy as they don't have 9-5 office based jobs and they may have a number of outside interests and involvements, their sermons for example, is that a personal activity or an organisational activity? (I/2)

Brown (2014) stated that "lines are inevitably blurred between the records of individuals, organisations and wider society" (p. 2). Nevertheless to enable access and traceability of records, it is necessary to keep records in agreed organisational systems and not as personal resources.

In contrast to I/2, I/3 found that theoretically users were open to help and change, but not in practice:

When it actually comes down to going in and looking at what they [the departments] have got and suggesting things, there is departmental independence and people never like people coming in to check up on what they are doing in terms of their records. (I/3)

The findings reported the finance department as already practicing records management initiatives to fulfil audit stipulations. Aside from the finance department, it was reported that as there were largely no perceived discernable benefits or requirements governing other departments, the maintenance of recordkeeping procedures were not deemed a priority. As the following quotations surmise:

Working with other staff members will present a unique set of challenges as putting records in to order [from the user's perspective] is never a priority and only matters when you need to find specific records. (I/1)

We all want to do things in the simplest and fastest way possible. (I/2)

The findings evidence a range of necessary tools to deliver records management: guidelines that encompass, for example, retention schedules, certain types of legislation, i.e. sharing information with third parties under the data protection, managing emails and electronic records, coupled with “training and implementing enabling technologies” (Daum, 2007, p. 2), as well as an overall understanding of “the information culture” (Oliver, 2008, p. 363).

4.6.3 Overall success of records management

A report of the success of records management for CS1 was not applicable at the time of interview, as extremely limited action had been completed. CS2 has made significant progress within a focused timeframe, although the project is not completed and has overrun. The support and financial backing of the Dean and Canons proved to be the primary motivator in it's progress. Less encouragingly, I/3 states:

Currently I would say that we have not been successful at all. (I/3)

This is due to the ad hoc manner in which records management is approached and lack of personnel to introduce and reinforce the required changes.

Overall success of records management programmes has found to be determined by the following vital factors:

- Systematic planning within a holistic framework of “people, policy, procedures, technology and tools” (Cumming, 2003, p. 3).
- Strategic backing and financial support from the governing body of the cathedral.
- Formalised records management systems to ensure the ongoing access and preservation of records in all formats.
- Adequate staff resources to implement and monitor records management.
- Delivery of the strategy through a variety of tools.
- Understanding the requirements of the user and promoting information responsibility.

A successful records management strategy will:

- Provide evidence of business transactions and activities.
- Fulfil evidential requirements for legislative and accountability purposes.
- Ensure that the institutional heritage is protected.
- Provide “considerable competitive benefits and overall improved performance” (Best, 2010, p. 64).
- Assist in decreasing storage costs.
- Ease storage space.
- Enable access to records in a timely and efficient manner.

4.7 Further considerations

4.7.1 Cathedrals as businesses

Cathedrals, similarly to any other type of organisation, depend upon information for a variety of reasons, as demonstrated in this paper and the following comments:

Cathedrals need records management no less than anybody else, which is being realised. Cathedrals are businesses after all and records management is primarily a business technique. (I/1)

Because many cathedrals have a tradition of caring for records that stretches back hundreds of years there is an ingrained awareness that we need to keep our records properly. (I/2)

4.7.2 Financing records management

The success of the implementation of records management is evidenced as progressing only with the necessary financial backing in place. Two out of the three cases studied lacked financial support and were consequently unable to carry out necessary records management actions. This tellingly signifies a fundamental barrier to the implementation of records management in the cathedral field, as cathedral establishments, although diverse in many respects, share similarities and are essentially small in size and under-resourced. The sector is therefore undoubtedly reliant on online resources and free guidance, for instance provided by that of the Church of England Record Centre.

Although the findings indicate that the greatest outgoing is staff time, other expenses could include storage facilities, equipment and materials, training, and disposing of records securely.

4.7.3 Collaboration in the cathedral sector and the wider religious archive community

I/2 remarked on the importance of sharing acquired experiences and knowledge. Groups such as the Cathedral Library and Archives Association are vital forums to promote and learn more about issues regarding records management. I/2 also encouraged utilising expertise outside of the cathedral community from sources such as the National Church Institutions and the Religious Archives Group.

The publications compiled by the Church of England Record Centre are demonstrated as an integral source of information to the cathedral sector, however the findings evidence a need for further practical and simplified guidelines. This paper suggests that distributing guidance through alternative means, for instance regular training events and one-to-one advice, could be effective in assisting practitioners.

4.8 Summary of findings

This chapter has provided an overview of background information, including the organisational structure, staff details and state of recordkeeping for each case. It has presented an analysis of the documentary evidence and a cross-case analysis of the interview findings, accompanied by the literature review findings to establish how records management is currently implemented within the sector. The results were presented thematically based upon the methodological framework derived from the ISO 15489 standard and surmise the following:

4.8.1 Planning and design

The overarching framework of records management is underpinned by legislation and regulations, which emphasise the importance of keeping and maintaining records in an appropriate and accountable manner. Cathedral organisations are responsible to national legislation, cathedral legislation, business requirements and sector-wide best practices.

Standards are relied upon by organisations to create a professional environment of best-practice procedures. Nonetheless standards are not utilised by the interviewees who instead rely on a variety of sources for assistance in records management. The *Chapter and Verse: Care of Cathedral Records* (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013) guide is evidenced as the predominant source of help. Although the described alternative sources are valuable informants on the topic of records management, the sector could benefit from further research and publications, as the findings evidence a need for greater simplified and practical advice. Alongside published guidance to assist practitioners, a case to disseminate information through additional avenues, such as regular sector-wide training could be merited.

Records management is found to be best delivered through a strategic and systematic approach incorporating planning, design, implementation and monitoring, which recordkeeping systems are considered to be an integral component of. The formal capture of records into an organised system will establish records of high quality (Williams, 2014 and McLeod and Childs, 2007) and therefore ensure evidence of business transactions are kept; evidential requirements for legislative and accountability purposes are fulfilled; and the institutional heritage is protected.

4.8.2 Implementation

A formalised policy encompasses the strategic framework for records management and is therefore of vital importance. The findings demonstrate that the cases have or intend to produce a policy and cite the support of relevant stakeholders and management as paramount in its delivery.

The findings show that all three cases have been unable to establish clear roles and lines of responsibility. To designate information responsibilities, it is suggested to assign a representative employee who is responsible for the management of the respective records of every department. Information and records management is further revealed to be the responsibility of all staff members guided by strategic and operational direction.

The implementation of a recordkeeping system is delivered through a number of common processes and controls:

- To establish the format in which records are created at the point of creation.
- A comprehensive records survey provides an ongoing means of appraisal to identify what records are held by an organisation, records needed for continuing administrative, legal or fiscal purposes and records pertaining historical or research value.
- Consistent retention and disposal procedures devised within a framework tailored to the individual organisation and supported by the recommendations for retention set out in the *Chapter and Verse: Care of Cathedral Records* (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013) guide.
- Organisation of records in shared filing structures, rather than as personal resources.
- Ensuring that records are stored appropriately in line with sector best-practice.
- Appropriate disposal and archival procedures.
- Applying best-practice controls and measures to adequately protect the security of records.
- Managing the specific requirements of electronic records.

4.8.3 Monitoring

Monitoring is an ongoing process set with “defined but adaptable limits” (Best, 2010, p. 65). Examples of indicators of compliance in the assessment of a records management strategy include: reductions in both paper and electronic storage space; legislative compliance and accountability; and transferability and ease of access. Two out of the three cases plan to monitor records management annually.

Reactions from users to changes to working procedures are evidenced as mixed; whilst initial positive feedback was gleaned from CS2 and CS3, resistance and defensiveness was thereafter experienced by CS3 as the programme progressed. Motivating employees to personally undertake the required new practices is achieved by:

- Understanding the “information culture” (Oliver, 2008, p. 363) of the organisation.
- Creating guidelines that document necessary procedures and processes.
- Training and implementing enabling technologies” (Daum, 2007, p. 2).

Further aspects to consider include: collaboration with IT personnel, the cathedral sector and the wider religious archives community and means of financing records management. Areas for the direction of future research to focus upon include: the development of simplified and practical publications specific to the cathedral sector distributed through both published guidelines and alternative means, such as training events; and the development of solutions to facilitate the long-term preservation of electronic records that encompass the needs of organisational users and are addressed collaboratively amongst the cathedral sector and wider religious archival communities.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents recommendations arising from the study to assist primarily the cathedral sector, but also small private-based establishments, in dealing with records management. The recommendations are informed by both the literature review and empirical stage of the study and are presented with relevant supporting quotations from the findings.

5.2 Recommendations 1-21

1. Implement a systematic approach to records management

Ad hoc recordkeeping does not denote good recordkeeping practice. Successful records management is best implemented through a systematic approach that incorporates planning, design, implementation and monitoring. Such an approach empowers organisations to control their records ensuring:

- Evidence of business transactions and activities are kept.
- Evidential requirements for legislative and accountability purposes are fulfilled.
- The institutional heritage is protected.
- “Considerable competitive benefits and overall improved performance” (Best, 2010, p. 64).

2. Benchmark best practice

Parameters must be devised at the outset of a programme to establish what constitutes as a record and what does not. The ISO 15489 standard defines the essential qualities of a record as possessing reliability, authenticity, integrity and usability (ISO 15489-1, 2001), it is therefore recommended that organisational records management benchmark best practice against the following ensuring that:

1. The **authenticity** of records is maintained.
- Records are created and maintained in the best format for their purpose.
 - The records document a complete and accurate representation of the activities and transactions performed by the organisation.

- Records can prove what they purport to be through identification of original copies.
- Master copies of records are identified to ensure unnecessary duplication throughout the organisation.

2. The **reliability** of records is maintained.

- The regulatory and legislative requirements for the management of records are met.
- Ownership and responsibility for managing organisational records is clearly established.
- Historical accountabilities are met and records of long-term value are identified and preserved as archives.
- Other records are appropriately destroyed when no longer needed.

3. The **integrity** of records is maintained.

- Records provide adequate evidence of the business or transaction to which they relate.
- Records comply with the recordkeeping requirements of best practice outlined in relevant standards and legislation.
- Information required by stakeholders and employees is provided in a timely and efficient manner.

4. The **usability** of records is maintained.

- Records are available and easily accessible at all times to authorised users as required.
- Inconsistencies and errors with regards to storage and access to information are minimised.
- Ease of access and traceability are maintained for as long as the record is required.

3. Research organisation's legal and regulatory environment

It is important for every organisation to identify the legal, regulatory, business, best practice and societal requirements for creating and keeping records. The cathedral sector is responsible to the following:

- National legislation – i.e. the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Cathedral legislation (including statutory independent bodies) – i.e. the Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011 and The Fabric Advisory Committee (FAC).
- Business requirements – i.e. financial audits.

- Sector-wide best practice recordkeeping standards - i.e. *ISO: 15489: Information and Documentation – Records Management* (Parts 1 and 2) (International Organisation for Standardisation, 2001).

4. Introduce a policy

The records management policy provides the overall framework of how an organisation intends to create, keep and manage records, which support “it’s mission and key organisational functions” (Yakel, 2000, p. 26). Support established from the senior management and relevant stakeholders is essential to the success of a records management policy.

A records management policy should be comprehensive in terms of:

- Format – it should cover all records of all types.
- Lifetime – it should cover records throughout their life.

5. Assign roles and responsibilities to ensure good records management practice

Organisations should define roles and lines of responsibility for managing records so that it is clear who is responsible and accountable for what. To develop good records management practice the following areas of responsibility need to be fulfilled: policy and strategic direction; operational day to day management of information and records; and overall departmental records management in accordance with agreed procedures.

Further it is recommended that “responsibilities should be assigned to all employees of the organisation” (ISO 15489-1, 2001, clause 6.3). All employees who create, receive and use records are responsible for records management and should maintain a complete and accurate record that adequately documents their work.

6. Develop a procedure for ongoing appraisal of records

A records survey can ascertain which records are needed for ongoing administrative, legal or fiscal purposes and to also determine which records have historical or research value, identifying: “what has been created, what is retained and what is vital” (I/1) of records in all formats.

7. Implement retention and disposal procedures

It is recommended that there are consistent retention and disposal procedures to document all records. The procedures need to include permanent preservation for archival records and be devised within a framework specific to the legislative and internal needs of the individual organisation (see recommendation no. 3).

Cathedrals are encouraged to follow the recommendations set out in *Chapter and Verse: Care of Cathedral Records* (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013) which details the minimum retention periods for various classes of records and was formulated in the context of national legislation and sector-wide best practice standards.

8. Organise records through an organisational filing structure

The creation of an organisational filing structure will reflect logical groupings of records to facilitate and encourage sharing and ultimately to assist “ease of access and traceability” (I/2). Organisational records should not be managed as a personal resource, but instead saved as “one series [of records] which everybody can access, rather than everybody having their own individual series” (I/1).

9. Keep duplication to a minimum

This should be achieved at the point of creation through the following necessary steps:

- Establish master copies to ensure that other copies can be correctly identified as duplicates and disposed of when no longer needed for immediate use.
- Establish the format in which records are created. By formalising the format of records, duplication can be reduced, most especially between paper and electronic records.

10. Store records in appropriate storage

All records need to be stored in appropriate storage. Appropriate storage enables records to be readable for as long as is required, prevents damage and restricts unauthorised access. It is recommended that records in all formats are stored in line with the guidelines established by

the Church of England Record Centre (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013a and 2013c).

11. Managing electronic records

The management of electronic records are guided by the same principles as those of any records. However the means by which they are managed in the electronic environment differ. Effective electronic recordkeeping requires the following measures to be taken:

- The use of templates to ensure consistent and appropriate creation.
- The creation of metadata necessary to document business practices. Metadata associated with electronic records has to be made explicit, as it is only through “participating in the very act of creation that the long-term preservation of the record is ensured” (Trance, 2002, p. 138).
- Storing records on a shared networked drive, not on personal files to ensure that records can be readily accessed.
- Standardising naming conventions.
- Making regular back-up copies.
- Establishing a system for managing email messages that are deemed as records.
- Saving images on image management software, rather than shared drives, to save valuable storage space

Further detailed advice can be sought from the online Church of England Record Centre guides that outline advice for managing electronic records (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013a) and emails (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013b).

12. Digital preservation requires careful planning from the outset

The issues of long-term storage of electronic records are vast and complex. It is therefore outside the scope of this paper to issue specific technological recommendations. However findings gleaned from the documentary analysis raised the following points of consideration:

- Preparations to ensure the long-term preservation of all records require to be implemented at the very act of creation. Metadata has to be made explicit at this point. Vital records that have to be retained for a specific length of time should be prioritised.

- Portable devices, such as CD – ROMS, DVDs and USB drives are not intended for the long-term storage or preservation of digital records.
- Records that are stored on an organisation’s network can be backed up and in most cases are retrievable if accidentally deleted or in the case of system failure.
- If using new technology such as ‘cloud computing’ investigate the company fully and any associated risks with storing information in such a manner.
- Information that is not migrated from one system to another is at risk of obsolescence as equipment and/or software is quickly outdated.

13. Create formal partnerships with the IT professionals of an organisation

It is desirable to research related interdisciplinary knowledge and developments and to:

Get the IT advisor, not only on board but in the driving seat, when it comes to ensuring that people manage their electronic records. (I/3)

14. Security and access of records

Records must be securely maintained to prevent unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal. It must be possible to prove that adequate protection is provided to ensure the integrity of the records for the purpose of internal and external audits.

Electronic records are particularly vulnerable to cyber attacks and purposeful or accidental loss of information and alterations. To identify organisational security risks and to apply appropriate controls to reduce the risks, utilise best practice expertise (ISO 27001, 2005).

15. Implement disposal and archiving procedures

To avoid a back-log of obsolete records, apply appropriate disposal procedures; records selected for preservation and no longer in current use by the organisation should be transferred to the archive department. Records not selected for permanent preservation and which have reached the end of their administrative life should be destroyed by confidential and non-recoverable means. In turn this will assist in decreasing storage costs for the organisation, accessing current records in a timely and efficient manner, easing storage space and complying with legislation.

For records which are not consulted on a regular basis, but are still required for access, it can be useful to designate an interim record store which will free up valuable office space.

16. Understand the user's perspective and increase information responsibility

Whilst it is important to understand how systems support organisational processes, it is equally important to gain an understanding of the user's perspective (this could be through observation and/or interviews), as employees influence the context of records creation and use in terms of, for example, information sharing behaviours, values attached to records and organisational commitment to records management. By working with users and understanding how records are created and maintained, an awareness of information responsibility will increase and "employees will be personally motivated to undertake the required new practices" (Daum, 2007, p. 2).

17. Deliver the strategy through a variety of tools

To establish the new working practices organisation-wide, it is recommended that the implementation of records management be delivered through a variety of tools:

- *Ongoing training*

Providing ongoing training for users by those responsible for records management will ensure that records management procedures are being carried out appropriately.

- *Creation of tools in the form of recordkeeping guidelines*

Guidelines will enable individuals and departments to proactively manage the records that they produce and will need to be distributed widely in an accessible format. Examples of topics that guidelines cover include:

- Retention schedules detailing the types of record, location of records, length of time for which they should be kept and method of disposal.
- Guidance notes for certain types of legislation, i.e. sharing information with third parties under data protection.
- Guidance notes on how to proactively manage electronic records.
- Guidance notes on how to manage emails.

18. Regularly monitor records management procedures and policies

The application of records management procedures and policies should be regularly monitored against agreed indicators of compliance within a records management framework and action is taken to improve standards if necessary. Monitoring is recommended to be undertaken annually as a starting point.

19. Financing records management

It is recommended that organisations provide financial and other resources needed to achieve the objectives for managing records. Budget provision will primarily be needed to finance staff time, but should also be allocated for additional outgoings such as: secure storage facilities, equipment and materials, training and disposal of records.

20. Collaboration in the cathedral sector and the wider religious archive community

The findings stressed the importance of sharing acquired experiences and knowledge. Groups such as the Cathedral Library and Archives Association are vital forums to promote and acquire knowledge and could be particularly helpful in addressing universal challenges to the sector and profession, such as digital preservation. It is also encouraged to utilise expertise outside of the cathedral community from sources such as the National Church Institutions, the Parish Churches guidance, and the Religious Archives Group.

21. Sources of help in records management

Cathedrals are encouraged to utilise expertise in records management derived from a variety of standards, guidelines and sources:

Standards

- *ISO: 15489: Information and Documentation – Records Management (Parts 1 and 2)* (International Organisation for Standardisation, 2001).
- *ISO: 23081 Metadata for Records (Parts 1 and 2)* (International Organisation for Standardisation, 2006, 2007).
- *ISO: 27001 Information Technology – Security Techniques – Information Security Management Systems – Requirements* (International Organisation for Standardisation, 2005).

Guidelines

- The *Chapter and Verse: Care of Cathedral Records* (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013) guide.
- The Church of England records management guidelines for both paper and electronic records (The Church of England, 2015).

General records management sources

- Records management textbooks (see bibliography).
- Online resources provided by, for example the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Info Net (n.d.) and the National Archives (n.d.).

5.3 Summary

To create and sustain organisational records management systematic planning is recommended within a holistic framework of “people, policy, procedures, technology and tools” (Cumming, 2003, p. 3). To achieve this balance no one model can account as a solution to all cathedral organisations, however the presented recommendations provide generic points of reference that are developed in a sustainable framework to assist primarily the cathedral sector, but also small private-based establishments in implementing organisational records management.

It was identified that future research would be beneficial regarding a number of aspects of cathedral records management: the development of simplified and practical publications and guidance specific to the cathedral sector delivered through both published guidelines and training events or one-to-one advice and the development of solutions to facilitate the long-term preservation of electronic records undertaken collaboratively amongst the cathedral sector and wider religious archive community and aligned to the central users of an organisation who primarily influence the context of records creation and use.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this paper was to ascertain how records management is implemented within cathedrals in the United Kingdom. The specific research objectives were:

1. To establish best practice in records management through an analysis of relevant literature including principles, standards and guidelines.
2. To gain an understanding of how records management is currently implemented within the sector.
3. To provide recommendations on how to design and implement effective policies and programmes in the management of records within an organisation, in all formats and media, throughout their lifecycle/continuum.

This chapter will revisit the above aims and objectives and surmise the findings of the previous chapters.

6.2 Research objectives summary

6.2.1 Research objective one

It was demonstrated that due to the many differing factors of a comprehensive records management programme, no one solution is the same and that every solution should be considered within the context of its particular organisation. The ISO 15489 standard was found to represent an influential and critical set of principles and guidelines that outlined a methodological framework incorporating requirements in planning, design, implementation and monitoring. However it was shown to not fully address the technological challenges posed to the contemporary recordkeeping environment and to lack practical guidance in developing or implementing records management procedures. The *Chapter and Verse: Care of Cathedral Records* (The Church of England Record Centre, 2013) presented assistance specifically for cathedrals in records management. Again however further practical and simplified guidance was perceived as lacking from the guide. To understand best practice

therefore a variety of standards, guidelines and sources should be utilised collectively as non-prescriptive reference tools.

6.2.2 Research objective two

To establish an understanding of how records management is currently implemented in the cathedral sector, the study utilised a qualitative research design delivered through a multiple case study approach. The findings were generated by conducting semi-structured interviews with representatives in professional recordkeeping roles. The approach allowed the researcher to define common and differentiating factors and to gain an overall telling case of records management in the cathedral sector. It can be argued that the validity of the findings was marginally influenced by the inconsistent means in which the data was collected. Future replication of the study could be assimilated, if greater levels of consistency were applied to the data collection process. Overall the design method facilitated the application of the study, accurately represented the findings and furthered the sectors knowledge and understanding of records management providing a foundation on which to extend research in the cathedral field.

The cases were depicted at varying stages of progression in implementing records management; one case had made rudimentary steps, one case had compiled a strategic framework which it had begun to develop and implement; and one case had devised policies, procedures and systems, which it had failed to fully establish. The cases ranged in size and circumstances, but appeared to approach records management similarly in an ad hoc manner. The main variables that were identified as factors associated with the success of records management were evidenced as: systematic planning within a holistic framework of people, policy, procedures, technology and tools; strategic backing and financial support from the governing body of the cathedral; formalised recordkeeping systems to ensure the ongoing access and preservation of records in all formats; adequate staff resources to implement and monitor records management; delivery of the strategy through a variety of tools; and understanding the requirements of the user to promote information responsibility.

6.2.3 Research objective three

Conclusions drawn from objective three surmise that information is central to any organisation and needs to be managed. Implementing a successful records management

programme requires a strategic and systematic approach incorporating planning, design, implementation and monitoring to demonstrate that information serves a corporate purpose, that its relationship to performance can be shown and that it is empirically testable. The programme should be formulated within a unique framework that encompasses an understanding of the legislative and regulatory environment; technological context; and information culture of an organisation, delivered through a range of processes, controls and tools. Areas for the direction of future research to focus upon include: the development of simplified and practical publications and guidance specific to the cathedral sector through a range of methods; and the development of solutions to facilitate the long-term preservation of electronic records that encompass the needs of organisational users and are addressed collaboratively amongst the cathedral sector and wider religious archival communities.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview questions

Interviewee reference:

Case study code reference:

Cathedral:

Job title:

Date:

THEME 1. Planning and design

1. Do you follow any records management standards and/or guidelines? (If yes go to question 2 and if no go to question 3)
2. How helpful have you found the available records management standards, guidelines and literature?
- 3 Where do you seek guidance from with regards to records management?
- 4 Could you describe your approach to how records management has been planned and designed within the organisation? (i.e. as a strategic programme or on an ad hoc basis)

THEME 2. Implementation

1. Do you have a records management policy?
2. Who is ultimately responsible for records management within the organisation?
3. What records management actions have you taken to date with regards to both paper and electronic records? (i.e. have you conducted a survey?; do you have a retention schedule?, storage and handling procedures?; records disposal procedures?; etc.)
4. What records management actions do you still plan to implement with regards to both paper and electronic records?

THEME 3. Monitoring

1. How often do you intend to review records management within your organisation?
2. How will you measure the progress of records management? (i.e. legislative/regulatory compliance; efficiency of new working practices; creating more storage space)
3. How have the records management changes been received by the rest of the organisation (the users)?

THEME 4. Further considerations

1. What problems or issues have occurred and how did you solve them or how do you hope to solve them?
2. How would you describe the overall success of records management within your organisation so far and what are the reasons for this?
3. Do you have any further comments regarding records management in cathedrals or records management generally?

The interview schedule was structured according to the methodological framework set out by the ISO 15489 standard that incorporates requirements in planning, design, implementation and monitoring for records in all formats to ensure that they remain authoritative through retention of their essential characteristics: authenticity, reliability, usability and integrity. The questions are generalised in nature to accommodate the unique circumstances of an organisation, for instance size, legal and regulatory environment and resources.

Theme 1 – Planning and design

This section aims to establish how the selected case studies approach records management and to identify common and differentiating sources of assistance.

Theme 2 – Implementation

This section refers to how the selected case studies deliver all aspects of records management, in terms of policy, responsibility, recordkeeping systems, processes and controls.

Theme 3 – Monitoring

This section aims to establish the frequency with which the selected case studies monitor records management and common indicators of compliance according to the organisation policies and requirements. It also aims to understand more regarding the users of the records.

Theme 4 – Further considerations

This section refers to any arising issues or points of interest identified from the interview findings.

Appendix C: Consent form

Consent form

Title of project: Master's Dissertation: *An Exploration of how Organisational Records Management is Implemented within the Cathedral Sector through an Analysis of Three Case Studies* (working title)

Name of researcher/s: Lucy Barrell

Project authority: This research project is being undertaken as part of a Master's in Archive Administration from Aberystwyth University

- | | Please tick |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read and understood the information letter for participants and the researcher has explained the study to me. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I have received enough information about what my role involves. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I understand that my decision to consent is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I agree that the data I provide may be used by Lucy Barrell, within the conditions outlined in the accompanying letter. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I consent to participate in this study about records management within the cathedral sector. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name of participant (IN BLOCK LETTERS)	Signature	Date
Name of researcher (IN BLOCK LETTERS)	Signature	Date

Appendix D: Interview letter

Re invitation for research interview

Dear

You have indicated that you may be interested in participating in a research interview. Before you confirm whether you would like to be involved or not, please read the following information regarding:

- a) why the research is being conducted and
- b) what it will involve

a) Why is the research being conducted?

I am completing a dissertation as part of a distance learning MSc Econ in Archive Administration with Aberystwyth University. The working title of the dissertation is *An Exploration of how Organisational Records Management is Implemented within the Cathedral Sector; Three Case Studies*. I am undertaking the research on behalf of Hereford Cathedral to provide meaningful insight into this topic. The findings will ultimately stimulate further debate and research.

b) What will it involve?

You were chosen as a possible data source because it is understood that you have had significant involvement in records management within your organisation. The interview process will involve:

- **Duration:** It is expected to last 30-45 minutes.
- **Schedule:** The interview (face to face) will ask questions broadly regarding the planning, design, implementation and monitoring of records management within your organisation (although you can raise other issues if you wish to do so).
- **Confidentiality:** All the information you give will be treated confidentially. Both the *conversation* and the *information* you provide will be completely confidential and treated confidentially by the researcher.
- **Anonymity:** All interviews will be anonymous and personal data removed at the transcription stage. No individuals or organisations will be identified in the results. Any direct quotes included in the report (that is, quotes of the things recorded in the interview), will be used selectively and anonymously (that is, no one will be able to attribute/link the words to you). *Although the above steps will be taken to ensure anonymity, it should be noted that the sample group is small in size and that the cathedral library and archives domain is an extremely niche sector. As such certain references may reveal the identity of the interviewee to the wider cathedral community. Total anonymity therefore can not be guaranteed.*
- **Data security:** The information will be kept securely, and for only as long as necessary to: a) analyse the research data and b) report on the research and its findings.
- If you wish, you can request a copy of the transcript (printed words) of your interview.
- A full report and a summary of the research findings will be available upon completion (expected January 2015).

- To help further debate and research regarding records management in the cathedral sector, the completed dissertation will be available to the wider cathedral community.

If you would like to be interviewed please complete the consent form and return it to me to the above contact details.

I look forward to hearing from you and hopefully working with you on this research.

Kind regards,

Appendix E: A break down of themes and sub-themes

Case study 1 (CS1)

Theme no.	Theme	Relevant questions
1.	Planning and Design	
1a.	Standards	-
1b.	Guidelines	1.2
1c.	Alternative sources of help	1.1, 1.3
1d.	Organisational approach	1.4
2.	Implementation	
2a.	Policy	2.1, 2.3
2b.	Roles and responsibility	2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3
2c.	Implementation recordkeeping systems	1.4, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3
2d.	Implementation of electronic recordkeeping systems	2.3, 2.4, 3.2, 4.3
3.	Monitoring	
3a.	Review of records management	3.1, 4.3
3b.	Feedback from users	3.2, 4.1, 4.3
3c.	Problems/issues	2.4, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3
3d.	Overall success of records management	2.2, 4.2
4.	Further considerations	
4a.	Cathedrals as a business	-
4b.	Financing records management	-
4c.	Collaboration with other cathedrals and the wider religious archives community	-

Appendix F: Interview transcript extract broken down thematically

(Demographic and confidential details removed)

THEME 1. PLANNING AND DESIGN

1.1. Do you follow any records management standards and/or guidelines? (If yes go to question 2 and if no go to question 3)

We have used the *Chapter and Verse* guidelines produced by the Church of England Record Centre and the CLAA (Cathedral, Libraries and Archives Association). We have experience of public sector records management because we work quite closely with the records management team at ... We have experience of those systems and can broadly apply them to our work because we care, very unusually here, for the historic records of ... alongside those of the cathedral and parish churches, over two hundred, and the historic records of the diocese. So we have experience of parish records management, as outlined in the parish equivalent of the *Chapter and Verse* guidelines produced by the Church of England Record Centre. [Themes 1b & 1c]

1.2. How helpful have you found the available records management standards, guidelines and literature?

They are helpful, but cathedrals vary so much that there is a lack of detail and practical guidance. One aspect that we have found extraordinarily helpful, is guidance that I secured with the Church of England Record Centre from their records management team. For example, guidance on emails, particularly the electronic side of things, which is very helpful. The *Chapter and Verse* is a reflection of the diversity of cathedrals. More hold your hand guidance would be useful. Other guidance that I should probably mention is the Fabric Records guidance requirements; the requirements of cathedral measures, which are the requirements of architects to keep records relating to the work of cathedrals. [Themes 1b & 1c]

1.3. Where do you seek guidance from with regards to records management?

n/a

1.4. Could you describe your approach to how records management has been planned and designed within the organisation? (i.e. as a strategic programme or on an ad hoc basis)

Ad hoc thus far. We were tasked by our Receiver General, the Cathedral Administrator, to implement a records management policy, which is now in its second to final draft. We are hoping to implement a more managed system. In preparation for the policy we had a three month project looking at retention schedules for each project. We have now almost finalised retention schedules department by department. Our main aim is to have these retention schedules agreed with the departments, to have the records management policy in place, which needs to be agreed by the Chapter, and then to streamline the transfer of records to the archives according to the retention schedule. That is where we are moving towards. There are gaps that we haven't quite managed to get to grips with regarding electronic records. There are issues around the distinction between their own personal records and the organisation's records. We weren't very intrusive about that. The records management policy says that information is the property of the organisation and should be treated as such. This is difficult to apply to the clergy as they don't have 9-5 office based jobs and they may

have a number of outside interests and involvements, their sermons for example, is that a personal activity or an organisational activity? [**Themes 1d, 2b, 2d, 3c & 3d**]

Key

Theme 1	Planning and design
1a	Standards
1b	Guidelines
1c	Alternative sources of help
1d	Organisational approach
Theme 2	Implementation
2a	Policy
2b	Roles and responsibility
2c	Implementation of recordkeeping systems
2d	Implementation of electronic recordkeeping systems
Theme 3	Monitoring
3a	Review of records management
3b	Feedback from users
3c	Problems/issues
3d	Overall success of records management
Theme 4	Further considerations
4a	Cathedrals as businesses
4b	Financing records management
4c	Collaboration with other cathedrals and the wider religious archives community