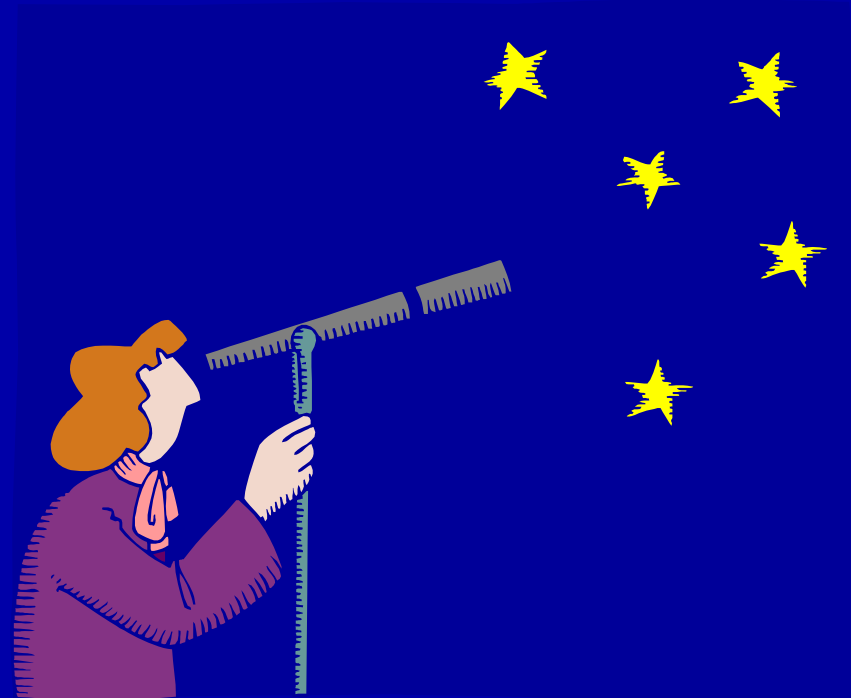


# Putting Ethics to Work

Southeast Region Educational Conference  
April 21-23, 2010  
Safety Harbor, Florida

J. Michael Pemberton, Ph.D., CRM, FAI



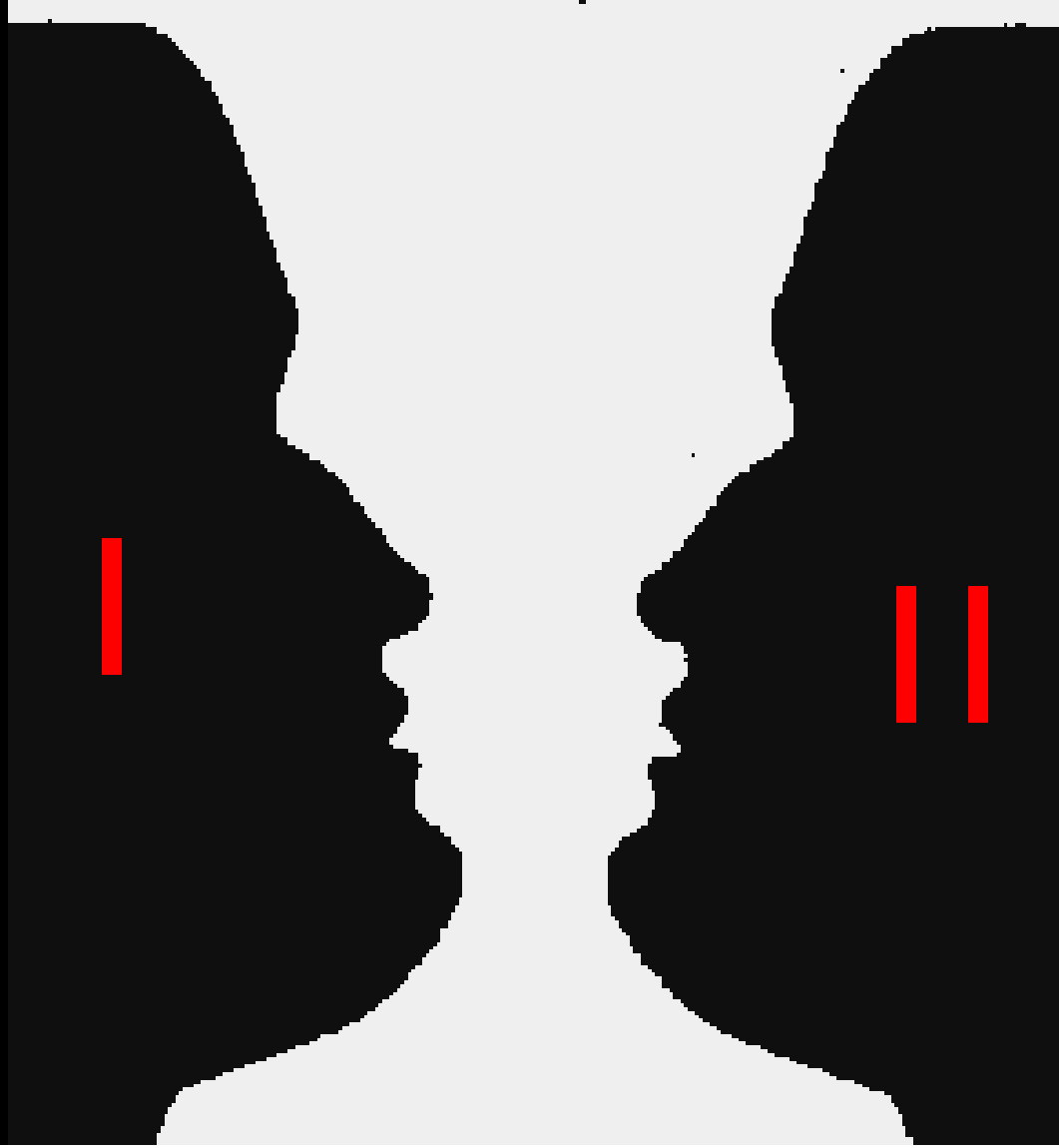
# Records Management

Perspective I

Perspective II

# A Professional Field


A Professional



The Profession

# Practitioners ---- Associations

- ✓ Personal scope
- ✓ Day-to-day, tactical view
- ✓ Skills/knowledge
- ✓ Able to **follow** codes/standards
- ✓ Widest field scope
- ✓ Longer-term, strategic vision  
body of knowledge
- ✓ Able to **create, maintain** codes / standards



"Hey, we can  
get personal  
information  
on 5 million  
people"

**A practitioner**

"But we  
should not  
invade  
people's  
privacy"

**The profession**

# Two Elements of a Professional Model

- ✓ Relevance to basic social values
- ✓ Code of ethics or professional responsibility

Ronald Pavalko,  
*Sociology of Occupations and Professions*

# Elements of Professional Fields (1)

## **Matters technical** (practitioner)

- ✓ Knowledge base / techniques / competencies / skills
  - ✓ Electronic records, retention schedules, metadata, preservation techniques, document management systems, etc.
- ✓ Doing work better, faster, cheaper
- ✓ Increasing output, cost-effectiveness
- ✓ Serving more customers

# Elements of Professional Fields (2)

## **Matters professional** (profession wide)

- ✓ Education
- ✓ Certification
- ✓ Compensation
- ✓ Status / image of the profession
- ✓ Values / ethics / professional responsibility

## **Ethics:** What's It About?

- ✓ *Values* (deeply held beliefs)
- ✓ *Morality* (sense of right/wrong; involves personal values)
- ✓ *Ethics*—values based field of philosophical enquiry which is the study of morality
  - ✓ “He has no ethics” – incorrect use of term

## Law vs. Ethics (1)

- ✓ It is both ethical **and** legal to buy and use computer software to be used as the maker requires in the license
- ✓ It is ethical but **not** legal to make a copy of that software to be used only as a backup in the event of complete system failure

## Law vs. Ethics (2)

- ✓ It is **not** ethical and now illegal to reveal data that was expected to be held in confidence
- ✓ It is **not** ethical and **not** legal to pirate copyrighted software or plant a computer virus in someone's computer

# Applied Ethics

Resolution of specific issues  
and morally problematic cases  
in varied areas of life

Includes: **professional ethics**

# Ethics: Prof. vs. Corporate

- ✓ **Professional** -- High road and low road--for individuals and organizations (who I am)
- ✓ **Corporate** -- Company / organization-specific; legalistic; tend toward low road (where I work)

# Ethics: High Road/Low Road

- ✓ **Low-road ethics**--specific, technical, regulatory, passive; focus on compliance and **not** doing the **wrong** thing
- ✓ **High-road ethics**--abstract, principle oriented, aspirational; **doing** the **right** thing; hard to operationalize, hard to sanction

**Values**

# “Values Alignment”

When the values of an individual or professional are the same as those of their organization

Professional

Cultural/Societal

→ **Values** ←

Personal

Organizational

**Aligning Your Values**

# Alignment of Values: Top Down

- ✓ Managerial, economic success
  - ✓ Productivity, cost containment, effectiveness, efficiency, information security
- ✓ People, human success
  - ✓ Need meaning in their jobs, personal fulfillment
  - ✓ Open communication
  - ✓ Trust
  - ✓ **Privacy**

# Shared Values

- ✓ Stewardship of resources
  - ✓ Preserving accurate, current, and authentic records for future needs & uses
- ✓ Compliance
  - ✓ Statutes, regulations, internal policy
- ✓ Privacy
  - ✓ Ensuring that it is protected

# Professional Values

# Ethics as Values

- ✓ Individuals apply their personal **values, beliefs, and attitudes** to dynamic situations in the workforce in order to make, implement, and evaluate optimal decisions

# Professional Issues Addressable Only at Association Level

- ✓ Educational standards
- ✓ Educational conferences
- ✓ Certification
- ✓ Image of the field
- ✓ Codes of **ethics** / **professional responsibility**

# Professions Have Relevance to Social Values

Having social value differentiates  
occupations **from** professions:

- ✓ *Medicine* — Life/Death/Health
- ✓ *Law* — Justice/Freedom
- ✓ *Librarianship* — Intellectual  
freedom/Learning/Knowledge
- ✓ The social relevance of records  
managers?

# Records and Social Relevance

- ✓ Large-scale records management project enables fraud-free election in El Salvador (1984)
- ✓ 30+ million records enable reunion of German families after WWII
- ✓ Records expose fraudulent claims of Ferdinand Marcos to be freedom fighter
- ✓ Nazi war criminals traced from clues in Berlin Document Center

# Social Values?

- ✓ For what do we stand?
- ✓ With whom do we stand?
- ✓ Whom do we protect and support?
- ✓ About what are we concerned or passionate?

**Privacy?**  
**And more**

# A Definition of a “Profession”

“A profession . . . involves the application of aspects of **society's basic values**”

Thomas Hoult

*Dictionary of Modern Sociology*

**No societal value, no profession**

# Institution of Engineers, Australia "Strategic Directions"

- ✓ Our values
  - ✓ Excellence in our work
  - ✓ Being innovative, competent
  - ✓ **Being ethical**

Technical/Moral

# National Defense (Canada)

- ✓ Information Management Group
  - ✓ Our values
    - ✓ Customer satisfaction
    - ✓ Excellence is our standard
    - ✓ **Integrity is our foundation**

Technical/Moral

# Values at Work

# A Whine of Records Managers

- ✓ "My management doesn't understand what I do."
  - ✓ No, and they don't care **what** you do, and they don't care **how you do it!**
- ✓ How are you relevant to **them**?
  - ✓ What do you do for them--personally?
  - ✓ Points of common ground, common concerns? **Privacy?**

# Which Will Get Their Attention?

"We do records retention research."



"We protect your privacy."

# Which Will Get Their Attention?

“We  
create  
filing  
systems”



“We can  
create a  
filing  
system  
for your  
office.”

What do we have in  
**communication?**



**Senior  
Managers**

**Records  
Managers**

**Make a List of What You  
Have in Common with Your  
Management**

# Information and Records Managers . . .

Support the creation, maintenance, and use of accurate information and support the development of information management systems which place the highest priority on accuracy and integrity.

ARMA International's  
"Code of Professional Responsibility"

# Information And Records Managers . . .

Condemn and resist

- ✓ **Unethical or immoral uses of information**
- ✓ Affirm that collection, maintenance, distribution, and use of information about individuals is a privilege in trust: **right to privacy of all individuals must be both promoted and upheld**

ARMA International's  
"Code of Professional Responsibility"

**IT**

# Records Are Records Are Records



Old tech

What's **in** a database or a file cabinet?

Files

Folders

Records

Documents



New tech



# IT Makes It Easier

- ✓ Identity theft
- ✓ Lost / stolen personal information
- ✓ Spying (employer or spouse)
- ✓ Cyberstalkers
- ✓ Unintentionally revealing information

# Whose Domain?

- ✓ Privacy concerns, policy, monitoring, and protection arise from ethical—not technical—concerns
  - ✓ Abuse of privacy starts with records
  - ✓ Records managers are intimately involved with policy and procedures in all organizational records issues
  - ✓ Privacy, therefore, is in the records manager's domain