

University of Louisville

## ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository

---

Faculty Scholarship

---

10-23-2023

### The Mindset of Recordkeeping: the Intersection of Records Management and Organizational Psychology

Hannah N. Pryor

University of Louisville, [hannah.pryor@louisville.edu](mailto:hannah.pryor@louisville.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.library.louisville.edu/faculty>



Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#)

---

#### Original Publication Information

Pryor, H.N. (2023), "The mindset of recordkeeping: the intersection of records management and organizational psychology", *Records Management Journal*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/RMJ-01-2023-0004>

#### ThinkIR Citation

Pryor, Hannah N., "The Mindset of Recordkeeping: the Intersection of Records Management and Organizational Psychology" (2023). *Faculty Scholarship*. 939. <https://ir.library.louisville.edu/faculty/939>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Scholarship by an authorized administrator of ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository. For more information, please contact [thinkir@louisville.edu](mailto:thinkir@louisville.edu).

# The Mindset of Recordkeeping: the Intersection of Records Management and Organizational Psychology

## Abstract

**Purpose:** This literature review aims to synthesize records and information management (RIM) with the professional literature of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology to explain undesirable recordkeeping behaviors that may manifest in employees who interact with business records.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The author's views are based on a literature review of both records management and organizational psychology trends and draw on case studies that identify undesirable recordkeeping behavior.

**Findings:** There is considerable overlap between the problems encountered by RIM professionals and the answers offered by I/O psychology. I/O psychology offers us the tools to better understand recordkeeping behaviors.

**Originality/value:** The author proposes using I/O psychology concepts to better situate RIM programs within the larger organizational context.

**Keywords:** Records management, information management, organizational psychology, industrial organizational psychology

**Paper type:** Literature review

## Introduction

Common undesirable records-related behaviors such as over-retention, disorganization, neglect, and territoriality are typically only considered when laying out the terms of non-compliance when records and information management policies are created. It is then left up to records managers to take a position of enforcement. Rather than taking that reactive approach, we can assess these behaviors, what causes them, and address them proactively. To do so, records and information management (RIM) professionals should become aware of the human motivations that may be driving these behaviors.

Records management is object-driven, but it is also people-driven. It is reliant upon the documentation generated and collected by employees of an institution. Other administrative functions within institutions, such as Human Resources, have already pioneered a shift toward people-centric approaches. Records management professionals have also moved in this direction in recent decades, but our understanding of human behavior can be further formalized by studying the literature of organizational psychology. This article investigates the human aspects of recordkeeping by synthesizing RIM and organizational psychology literature.

## Methodology

This literature review is intended as a means to introduce RIM professionals to key, notable ideas from the field of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology and show their overlap. To identify

1  
2  
3 relevant literature, I created a list of broad search terms, which were then queried in EBSCO,  
4 JSTOR, Project Muse, and Google Scholar databases. The initial results comprised around 160  
5 works. After that, the list was narrowed using specific keywords that appeared in the literature of  
6 both disciplines, such as “organizational culture,” “employee behavior,” and “resistance.”  
7 Additional works were discovered by reviewing the bibliographies of the selected articles. The  
8 narrowed list included 93 works. Publications were then selected by the degree to which they fit  
9 the thematic scope of this literature review; that is, whether they demonstrated principles that could  
10 be directly linked to the recordkeeping behaviors of employees. The final list, which can be found  
11 in this article’s references, comprises 34 works.  
12  
13  
14  
15

## 16 **Evolution of records management**

### 17 *Modern origins*

18 In brief, records management, as it exists now as a profession, originated in the 20th century to  
19 mean “the control of records within the organizations where they were created” (Yeo, 2018, pp.  
20 17-18), eventually encompassing both active and semi-active records. As time has gone on, RIM  
21 practices have overlapped more than ever with the principles of organizational management and  
22 psychology, as this literature review will demonstrate. Records managers now find themselves  
23 becoming information managers, serving as advisors to employees on how to navigate the overlap  
24 between legacy paper-based operations and the digital world. Information managers practice the  
25 larger field of information governance, which is not limited to only traditional records. Instead, it  
26 is a system that is “a focused subset of corporate governance that directs and controls an  
27 organization’s information assets” (Saffady, 2021, p. 25), in which records management plays a  
28 part in tandem with other policies and frameworks. The question is: how do we proceed as  
29 managers of both people and information?  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35

### 36 *People-centric approaches*

37 In the past few decades, several voices have arisen calling for records management practices to be  
38 more people-centric. Gesmundo et al. (2022) studied the correlation between records management  
39 and the professional performance of administrative employees, linking effective records managers  
40 to effective business operations and employee success. But, while this efficiency could be credited  
41 to a records manager ensuring rigid compliance, case studies have found that effective records  
42 managers are flexible and cooperative. Oliver and Foscarini (2020) are some of the leaders in this  
43 more humanistic approach, saying that “there should be a commitment to work with the users (as  
44 opposed to doing things to them) and to listen to their concerns on an ongoing basis, with the clear  
45 aim of building a relationship of trust—in short, to act ethically and responsibly” (p. 139).  
46  
47  
48  
49

50 A decade earlier, McLeod (2012) discussed expanding the role of records professionals beyond  
51 the traditional scope. She investigated what it would look like to develop a records management  
52 program that positions the records manager as a solution, not part of the problem, and as someone  
53 who seeks long-term success, not perfection. McLeod entreats records professionals to “expand  
54 their role as facilitator, advisor, systems selector, developer and implementer” (p. 191). This would  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 mean adapting our approach to be people-centric, rather than “obsessing” about systems and  
4 procedures. We are not positioning ourselves advantageously by staying strictly the enforcers of  
5 retention schedules and statutes. Developments in management practices and technology require  
6 new methods.  
7  
8

9  
10 Another way to view records in a people-centric way is to assess the records in light of their  
11 business value rather than their legal value. Barragan (2019) assessed the gap introduced by  
12 modern electronic data systems when looking through the lens of old retention models. He  
13 proposes updating the ARMA Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles (GARP) maturity  
14 model to account for new ways of valuing information. His proposal uses three categories of value:  
15 economic (or core), legal/regulatory, and historical. He writes, “unless records and information  
16 management professionals acknowledge that most information is being kept in order to meet a  
17 possible business need (or for fear of audits), then it will be very arduous to actually develop a  
18 life-cycle governance policy that is actually followed, and hence has any relevancy” (p. 112). This  
19 touches on ideas surrounding ownership and resistance to change that are explained in more depth  
20 in I/O psychology literature.  
21  
22  
23  
24

### 25 *Information culture*

26 Before discussing I/O psychology, we will broadly define the idea of “information culture” as an  
27 employee’s information behavior, shaped by the organizational culture (Sundqvist and Svärd,  
28 2016); information culture dictates how individuals create and interact with the information  
29 generated during daily business. Challenges arise when information culture intersects with  
30 traditional records management, as documented by Svärd (2011) when reviewing a project “where  
31 certain categories of people like the archivists and IT staff were left out because they were  
32 considered as a hindrance other than a resource” (Sundqvist and Svärd, 2016, p. 12). This ties back  
33 to McLeod’s earlier call to position ourselves as problem-solvers, rather than as a roadblock.  
34 Analyzing information culture gives us insight into why record creators act the way they act,  
35 whether because of their situations, organizational culture, or the overall culture in which their  
36 organization operates. For example, a business in Canada is going to have a very different  
37 information culture than one in South Korea.  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42

43  
44 Oliver et al. (2018) take this one step further by linking information culture to the practice of what  
45 they describe as scaled down “ethnography-lite,” (the scientific study of peoples and their  
46 cultures). Their article, which uses 2016 version of the Information Culture(s) Toolkit published  
47 by the International Council on Archives (Oliver et al, 2019) as a framework, found that if people  
48 do not understand why recordkeeping is important, then there is “a disconnect between  
49 recordkeeping compliance approaches and expectations, on the one hand, and the practices and  
50 preferences of the staff, on the other” (p. 179). Studying the behaviors of employees leads to new  
51 insights into how RIM policies are followed –or not – as part of daily operations.  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 As technology has advanced and the records lifecycle model has evolved into the records  
4 continuum model, RIM professionals find themselves at a crossroads. We must grow and evolve  
5 our approach to our jobs, vital as they are to institutional function. We must develop a more  
6 complete understanding of our institutions, expand our knowledge beyond traditional subjects, and  
7 apply our expertise to ever-changing situations. Rather than reinventing the wheel, we can  
8 collaborate with and graciously borrow from the decades of organizational psychology  
9 scholarship.

## 13 **I/O psychology**

### 14 *Origins*

15  
16 I/O psychology was born as a subset of the larger field of psychology around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup>  
17 century. At the time, it focused mostly on improving efficiency and productivity, but in recent  
18 decades, it has shifted to study workplace discrimination, democracy, and employee well-being  
19 (Koppes, 2007). The goals of I/O psychology are “to better understand and optimize the  
20 effectiveness, health, and well-being of both individuals and organizations” within the context of  
21 their work lives (Rogelberg, 2007, p. xxxv). This includes studying training and development,  
22 organizational effectiveness, the behavior of individuals and teams, communication, motivation,  
23 and change management. This article will look at key works from the I/O psychology body of  
24 literature for the following concepts: decision-making, individual vs. group behavior, and Self-  
25 Determination Theory. These concepts overlap with the employee recordkeeping behaviors that  
26 records managers encounter.

### 31 *Decision-making*

32  
33 Most recordkeeping behaviors are centered on making decisions. Employees are constantly faced  
34 with choices: how should records be managed? What should be done with them at the end of their  
35 active use in daily business? Do the records have secondary value outside of their initial  
36 administrative use? What is the risk of keeping (or getting rid of) records?

37  
38  
39  
40 Decision-making is a large topic in I/O psychology. Simon’s formative work on the subject,  
41 *Administrative Behavior* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1997) discusses the impact of all employees, from the top to the  
42 bottom of the organizational chart, on an organization’s business, and vice versa. An important  
43 takeaway from Simon is that “all decision is a matter of compromise” and that “the alternative that  
44 is finally selected never permits a complete or perfect achievement of objectives, but is merely the  
45 best solution that is available under the circumstances” (p. 5). The number of alternatives to choose  
46 between is limited by the environment in which the decision is being made. This encapsulates three  
47 ideas that have become through lines in later conversations about administrative decision making:  
48 bounded rationality, the impact of the organizational environment, and the concept of “satisficing,”  
49 as described in the quote above.

50  
51  
52  
53  
54 Before discussing what bounded rationality is, we must first touch upon the idea of heuristics. Its  
55 meaning has shifted over the years, but Goldstein and Gigerenzer (2002) defined it as the  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 “strategies that prevent one from finding out or discovering correct answers to problems that are  
4 assumed to be in the domain of probability theory” (p.75). So, heuristics attempt to explain the  
5 “discrepancies between these rational strategies and actual human thought processes.”  
6  
7

8 Because people do not have unlimited time or resources to make a decision, they use algorithms  
9 that are “fast and frugal without a significant loss of inferential accuracy” (Gigerenzer and  
10 Goldstein, 1996). In their article, Gigerenzer and Goldstein found that this kind of quick reasoning  
11 could result in as many correct inferences in less time than more traditional models.  
12  
13

14 This may lead to people trusting what they call their intuition in situations where it might not be  
15 sufficient, since it is rewarded most of the time. Barragan (2022) discusses bounded rationality  
16 and proposes how a risk/reward heuristic plays into records decision-making, specifically records  
17 disposition. He defines bounded rationality as “the idea that humans have cognitive and  
18 environmental limitations that constrain people from making optimum decisions, which leads  
19 people to make a satisfactory decision or one that satisfies their immediate needs” (p.171).  
20 Barragan credits behaviors such as over-retention of records to a “risk/reward” heuristic, where  
21 employees balance the risk of keeping a record past its retention period with the (mostly unlikely)  
22 reward of having that record in case it may have later business use. Barragan says that keeping  
23 information satisfies the risk and reward part of the employee’s decision-making process, since it  
24 avoids the risk of not having the information when requested, and they are rewarded by the mere  
25 act of still possessing it. But, as Barragan mentions, this increases the risk of more likely, and more  
26 damaging, legal consequences and data breaches. My own professional experience reflects this  
27 situation in which conversations with business units revealed the over-retention of files in case  
28 they might be requested during an audit occurring years, and sometimes decades, after they should  
29 have been destroyed.  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35

### 36 *Individual vs. group behavior*

37 Employee behavior does not occur in a vacuum. Van Bussel (2020) links organizational climate  
38 and culture directly to employee behavior. Organizational climate is how an individual employee  
39 perceives their work environment, while organizational culture is related to the overall “way things  
40 are done in an organization”, based on “assumptions, values, beliefs, norms, desired behaviors,  
41 and artefacts” (p. 8). Returning to an earlier section, this is the set of factors that determine an  
42 organization’s information culture. Recordkeeping behavior is shaped by the social norms  
43 communally created by the group.  
44  
45  
46  
47

48 The behavior of a group of people can differ from the behavior of individuals. Since records  
49 managers often approach units or departments, not a single employee, this is an important concept.  
50 Returning to Simon (1997), records managers should consider that, if analyzing the decisions made  
51 by an individual within the context of their social group, “the decisions of the other individuals  
52 will be included among the conditions which each individual must consider in reaching his  
53 decisions. That is, each individual, in order to determine uniquely the consequences of his actions,  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 must know what will be the actions of the others” (p. 80). If the group is functioning positively,  
4 this can lead to information sharing and a broad application of expertise.  
5

### 6 7 *Self-Determination Theory*

8 A large concept that we can borrow from I/O psychology is the idea of intrinsic and extrinsic work  
9 motivation and Self-Determination Theory (SDT). SDT “maintains that an understanding of  
10 human motivation requires a consideration of innate psychological needs for competence,  
11 autonomy, and relatedness” (Deci and Ryan, 2000, p. 227). These needs can be met through  
12 intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsically motivated employees are those who perform a task  
13 because they find it enjoyable. On the other hand, extrinsically motivated employees complete a  
14 task because of an outside consequence such as receiving a reward or avoiding a punishment  
15 (Gagné and Deci, 2007). Since it may be difficult to enforce compliance using policy alone,  
16 extrinsic employee motivation for records management often takes the form of individual  
17 repercussions such as increased executive pressure (Chandler, 2022) and organizational threats of  
18 legal and financial consequences (Kahn, 2004).  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23

24 Recordkeeping duties, to most, are not intrinsically motivated—few people outside of RIM  
25 professionals would likely admit to finding the minutiae of organization and disposition appealing.  
26 Instead, we go back to McLeod, Childs, and Hardiman (2011) and their advice to lead by incentive,  
27 rather than by punishment. This observation is spot-on: first, people usually need to be extrinsically  
28 motivated to follow recordkeeping procedures, and second, we should motivate by educating and  
29 creating interest, not by punishing people who are, for the most part, doing their best.  
30  
31  
32

33 Since there is only so much we can do to make records management more interesting, we can  
34 encourage the internalization of extrinsic motivation. Internalization is the process of taking  
35 external regulations, like policies and procedures, and incorporating them into ourselves so the act  
36 of following them is self-determined (Deci and Ryan, 2000). For example, we can facilitate  
37 training to increase employees’ competence, autonomy, and relatedness, and explain the reason  
38 procedures are the way they are, instead of pressuring people to comply without explanation. This  
39 would do wonders to improve record disorganization and resistance to the changes we often bring  
40 to departmental procedures.  
41  
42  
43

### 44 **Marrying RIM and industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology**

45 Now that we have covered some key concepts from both fields, let us analyze in greater detail how  
46 these ideas can be applied to RIM practices. Imagine a scenario in which a RIM program has been  
47 established and policies and procedures have been distributed across an organization. Units have  
48 been trained and stakeholders are on board. And yet, as is often the case, even the most informal  
49 audit shows that compliance is spotty, at best. We could assume that people are choosing not to  
50 comply out of a lack of character, but that would be unfair and reductive. Instead, we can approach  
51 this problem from the foundation of psychology.  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 One approach is Van Bussel's theoretical framework "Archive-as-Is," which places archives  
4 within the context of their organizations—simply put, as the product of organizational and  
5 individual behaviors and decisions (2017). His 2020 paper discusses the organizational behavior  
6 component of the framework in more detail: "information behaviour within an organization is  
7 influenced by changing perceptions and interpretations based on psychological and/or relational  
8 climates, on the different perspectives of organizational culture employees experience, the mental  
9 models they share, their psychological contracts, their social identification with the organization,  
10 and/or the managerial corrective consequences of negating desired behaviour" (2020, p. 105). This  
11 information behavior can have positive or negative effects overall, but for the purposes of this  
12 literature review, we will be focusing on undesirable behaviors.  
13  
14  
15  
16

17 In many cases, non-compliance may stem from basic situational factors. As professionals, we often  
18 fall into the trap of actor-observer bias, which "predicts that when looking at a given set of actions,  
19 we will attribute other people's motivations to personal traits while attributing our own motivations  
20 to situational factors" (Eisen 2021, p. 2).  
21  
22

23 This assertion is backed up by Christiansen and Tett (2008), who relate that personality and work  
24 behaviors are reliant on the situation. That means that a trait that is considered positive in one  
25 situation may lead to negative behavior in another. For example, a tendency to perfectionism can  
26 cause high adherence to policy, but it can also lead one to inaction if it is unclear how to achieve  
27 what is being asked of oneself.  
28  
29  
30

### 31 *Understanding undesirable recordkeeping behaviors*

32 Many objections to records management principles start from a place of uncertainty, unease, or  
33 discomfort. Van Bussel (2020) identifies "four intangible phenomena that are directly influencing  
34 information behavior: (1) psychological ownership, (2) the way employees are (un-) consciously  
35 appraising information, (3) the neglect of social relations in 'over-organized' control systems, and  
36 (4) absent, unshared, or fragmented 'information culture'" (p. 9). For this article, I have identified  
37 three behaviors: disorganization, resistance, and over-retention that can be linked back to Van  
38 Bussel's phenomena, as well as to the concepts from I/O mentioned earlier.  
39  
40  
41  
42

43 The first behavior is disorganization, which may be the most common type of undesirable conduct,  
44 and can be caused by neglect - benign or otherwise, a lack of direction, or simply a lack of staff  
45 resources. Oliver et al. (2018) found that in their analysis of university culture, staff valued and  
46 trusted colleagues above everything else when gathering information about records practices. This  
47 trust within the unit was valued over best practices that are safeguards against things like staff  
48 changeover or lack of documentation. They found that if people were not given guidelines, they  
49 would make their own solutions that may follow the path of least resistance instead of following  
50 the requirements of the law. Hight and Smith (2016) encountered this challenge during their project  
51 with the Kansas State University provost's office to improve their records management workflow.  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 They acknowledge the overlooked importance of organizational psychology to records  
4 management. This article is, in part, a response to their call for further study. They write:  
5  
6

7 *One revelation from this pilot project that remains mostly unexplored is the*  
8 *influence of recordkeeping behaviors on RIM. The project interviews unearthed*  
9 *some deep-seated feelings of office staff that led to unfavorable behaviors, such as*  
10 *being apprehensive about disposal or transfer of records. (p. 55)*  
11  
12

13 Without guidance, office staff may base recordkeeping decisions on feelings and experiences, even  
14 to the long-term detriment of their unit. People typically want direction, especially if recordkeeping  
15 is an additional duty that does not appear in their official list of responsibilities. If little training is  
16 supplied for this ancillary but overlooked task, people may make up their own procedures or  
17 neglect record keeping entirely. This leads to disorganized records, both through the absence of  
18 structure and homegrown procedures that might not consider the importance of accessibility.  
19 Legacy filing systems left over from a pre-digital era might have left people with disorganized  
20 network drives or a plethora of inconsistent practices. Neglect can also be born from policies and  
21 procedures not reflecting business practices, especially in cases where an electronic document  
22 management system has been implemented.  
23  
24  
25  
26

27 The second behavior is resistance. McLeod, Childs, and Hardiman (2011) presented their findings  
28 from a three-year multidisciplinary project on electronic records management (ERM). One of their  
29 conclusions was that “people issues are predominant, fundamental, and challenging” (p. 4).  
30 Overwhelmingly, problems that arose from implementing ERM stemmed from a place of fear and  
31 resistance. Participants mentioned that a lack of communication, cynicism born from the  
32 experience of past failures, lack of training, and fear of the unknown were impediments to the  
33 adoption of new ERM processes. The article also addresses the human issues that records managers  
34 bring to the table: as part of the equation, the managers should not be “more concerned with the  
35 records management profession than with the aims, expectations and perceptions of the enterprise,  
36 the public, your customers and key stakeholders” (p. 8). They warn record managers away from  
37 approaches that use a “big stick” and instead use solutions that educate record creators and  
38 incentivize them to adopt new practices. Finally, they encourage people to “recognise people’s  
39 finite capacity for change” (p. 18). It should also be acknowledged that implementing a system for  
40 ERM presents unique challenges, as digital literacy plays a major part in the adoption, or rather,  
41 resistance to adopting new procedures. Human interaction with technology introduces a new set  
42 of challenges outside of the basic psychological factors influencing records-related behaviors.  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48

49 Global adoption of ERM has increased over the years, so it is necessary to identify key factors to  
50 successful implementation. Alshibly et al (2016) studied the implementation of electronic  
51 document management systems (EDMS) in government agencies, and what critical success factors  
52 (CSFs) determine the outcome. They identified six categories of CSFs based on existing literature  
53 and their own findings: technological readiness, top management support, training and  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 involvement, resource availability, system-related factors, and work environment and culture (p.  
4 288). Addressing these CSFs also works to address potential employee resistance to the move  
5 toward ERM and EDMS. Of the six CSFs, people-related factors ranked second, fourth, and sixth  
6 (top management support, training and involvement, and work environment and culture,  
7 respectively). Top management support, which only ranks behind system-related factors, is crucial  
8 for successful organizational and individual adoption of an EDMS. Alshibly et al. state that “if top  
9 management executives do not show any interest or support toward a system/project, employees  
10 within the organization would not believe in such a system/project. Some would even tend to resist  
11 it” (p. 298). Resistance can also stem from a lack of focus on the other CSFs, such as training and  
12 involvement. The article touches upon the importance of change management when anticipating  
13 resistance, which I discuss in a later section.  
14  
15  
16  
17

18  
19 Chandler (2022) identified two types of staff resistance to records management: 1) resistance to  
20 classification, in which classifications of records become outdated and time-consuming, with little  
21 incentive for employees to comply; and 2) resistance due to absence of incentives, where records  
22 managers use executive pressure to lean on employees, which can lead to people seeking loopholes  
23 in policy to remain in compliance while simplifying their tasks. They propose a method of records  
24 management that “move[s] away from *ISO 15489*’s mindset of ‘efficient and systemic control’  
25 and instead achieve[s] a sweet spot between the goal of orderly records and the goal of respecting  
26 staff autonomy” (Chandler, 2022, p. 286). I/O psychology is the study of organizational change  
27 and employees’ reactions to it.  
28  
29  
30

31  
32 People resist change for a lot of reasons—uncertainty, fear of becoming irrelevant, or mistrust of  
33 the people instigating the change. These reasons have a common theme : they could be mitigated  
34 by improving two-way communication and promoting transparency throughout the change  
35 process. Records managers often find themselves in a position of imposing external change,  
36 coming in as an outsider to the business function to dictate how things should be done. Schmierer  
37 (2007) provides a framework for managing resistance to change that includes: definition of a  
38 communication strategy; timely, clear, and consistent communication; encouragement of  
39 employee input and discussion of employee reactions; and provision of training and support (p.  
40 544).  
41  
42  
43

44  
45 However, not all resistance to change stems from a place of negativity. Hesitance or reluctance  
46 can also be caused by a desire to protect the unit or organization’s best interests, or an employee’s  
47 ethical principles (Piderit, 2000). Again, we go back to communication as key to managing  
48 employee reactions. If we effectively communicate the who, what, when, where, and why of  
49 records management, and make ourselves open to feedback, then we will face less active and  
50 passive resistance.  
51  
52

53  
54 The third behavior is over-retention. Record creators often serve as their custodians from their  
55 creation until their date of disposition. This ownership can lead to the development of an  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 attachment, especially if the records represent arduously completed work represented by elements  
4 of self-investment and the time or degree of interaction one has had with the record (Brown and  
5 Robinson, 2008). The creators may also have found secondary sentimental value in them, or  
6 develop the habit of keeping records for their own sake, which can lead to a hoarding mentality.  
7 A person might think: “if I don’t get rid of it, I’ll have it later if I need it.” Or alternatively: “I don’t  
8 have the time/energy/resources/training to go through this stuff, so it’s easier to just stick it in a  
9 closet.” This is not a proper response to monetary and legal costs of over-retention, but harkens  
10 back to the earlier discussion of heuristics and decision-making.  
11  
12  
13

14  
15 For example, a department might keep documents beyond their disposition date because not having  
16 had similar records in the past caused them a moderate level of difficulty. During their project,  
17 Hight and Smith (2016) “learned about the office’s recordkeeping culture in which staff members  
18 took care of their own records, and all were uncomfortable destroying those that had met their  
19 retention length, believing they might someday need such records” (p. 50). Conducting a  
20 consultation and exploring retention options together could clear up confusion, or even lead to  
21 updates in the retention schedule when necessary. If a retention schedule does not fit business  
22 needs, records may have been destroyed previously when they were needed, and so this tension  
23 can cause staff to be a hesitant to destroy those records in the future.  
24  
25  
26

27  
28 Another cause of over-retention may be territoriality, or “the behaviors people use to express their  
29 feelings of ownership toward physical or social entities. Embedded in the idea of territoriality are  
30 possessiveness and actions towards claiming, communicating and protecting our claims of  
31 ownership” (Brown and Robinson, p. 253). This concept can also be linked to resistance to change.  
32 Psychological ownership is often encouraged in the workplace, as it can increase employee  
33 performance and morale (Van Dyne and Pierce, 2004). But, taken to the extreme, it can cause  
34 negative side effects. Territoriality comes from the individual, but it is also influenced by their  
35 organizational culture and larger, societal culture. For example, employees from a Western country  
36 may be more likely to display traits of territoriality than employees from cultures that place less  
37 emphasis on individualism (Pierce et al., 2003).  
38  
39  
40

41  
42 Territoriality is often felt subconsciously and is not an active behavior meant to hurt the operations  
43 of the organization. It is not inherently “bad” behavior, but people can act irrationally or  
44 unpredictably when RIM professionals threaten their territory, leading to “feelings of frustration,  
45 fear and even grief for the loss of control of one’s possession” (Brown and Robinson, p. 260).  
46 Territoriality can also lead to a silo mentality, where information, knowledge, and workflows are  
47 kept secret from outsiders.  
48  
49  
50

51  
52 Once we are aware of the effect our intrusion into a business unit can cause, we can tread with  
53 more care and respect for employees’ beliefs. Piece et al. (2003) propose the process by which  
54 feelings of ownership are “decoupled” from one’s self-concept. This process stems from changes  
55 in routes to ownership, as targets become less available, or through formal rituals of decoupling  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 “their cognitive and emotional attachment to certain previous targets of psychological ownership”  
4 (p. 97). Territoriality is a large hurdle for a RIM professional to overcome, but identifying its  
5 influences on recordkeeping behavior is the first step. In situations that where territoriality is  
6 leading to undesirable behavior, steps can be taken to remove factors that encourage negative  
7 possessiveness, such as by making inactive records less visible to those affected or encouraging  
8 the employees to become a positive agent in the disposition of the records (Piece et al., 2003).  
9

## 12 **Implications for further research**

13 This literature review is not meant to be comprehensive, but a thematic introduction to concepts  
14 from the field of I/O psychology and how they tie into existing works by RIM professionals. The  
15 synthesis conducted by this article suggests that a more systematic application of heuristic and  
16 behavioral models to employee recordkeeping practices would shed light on the extent to which  
17 organizational culture and psychology influence records keeping and management.  
18  
19

## 22 **Conclusions**

23 The field of records management has grown from controlling records towards managing  
24 information and how employees interact with it. Records managers have begun to move toward  
25 people-centric approaches that take how employees value records into account, in addition to  
26 normal business and legal values within their organization’s information culture. I/O psychology  
27 helps us understand the disconnect between RIM policy and employee behavior that can lead to  
28 records disorganization, resistance, and over-retention. The heuristics of recordkeeping decisions  
29 are based in environments with constraints on their efficiency. Factors such as a sense of ownership  
30 toward the records can cause employees to purposefully choose non-compliance because they see  
31 it as less risky. Individual employees make these decisions within the larger environment of their  
32 team, unit, institutional cultures, sometimes with the collaboration of others.  
33  
34  
35  
36

37 Extrinsic motivations can be introduced by way of rewards and punishments, but providing  
38 employees with an avenue to internalize the recordkeeping process through personal agency may  
39 be more effective. This internalization can start by an explicit acknowledgement of the context in  
40 which RIM policies are created, and how they are shaped by their organizational culture and  
41 employee behavior. RIM professionals often enter the conversation from outside the business unit.  
42 Techniques borrowed from approaches such as change management, (the “...systematic and  
43 structured process of developing and implementing strategies and interventions for organizations  
44 transitioning from current state to a desired state,” Wang and Sun, 2012), can be used to explain  
45 how best to approach this process. However, it should be understood that our solutions should be  
46 clear and support existing business processes as much as possible. We are here to uphold the  
47 principles of recordkeeping as stated in ARMA International’s Generally Accepted Recordkeeping  
48 Principles® (2017): accountability, transparency, integrity, protection, compliance, availability,  
49 retention, and disposition. Creating a negative environment for record creators makes that even  
50 more difficult.  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 As records managers, we need to ensure that we do not focus on records at the expense of our  
4 relationship with their creators. Legal requirements and policies provide a vital framework but, to  
5 effectively do our jobs, that framework should be built upon with consideration and understanding  
6 toward the record creators. A balance must be found between ensuring requirements are being met  
7 while building connections with the people within the organization. If we keep an open mind so  
8 as to expand our knowledge to managing people with the help of I/O psychology, we will go a  
9 long way to becoming more effective records professionals.  
10  
11  
12

## 13 References

- 15 Alshibly, H., Chiong, R. and Bao, Y. (2016), “Investigating the Critical Success Factors for  
16 Implementing Electronic Document Management Systems in Governments: Evidence  
17 From Jordan”, *Information Systems Management*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 287–301, doi:  
18 [10.1080/10580530.2016.1220213](https://doi.org/10.1080/10580530.2016.1220213).  
19  
20  
21 ARMA International (2017), “*Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles®*”, available at:  
22 <https://www.arma.org/general/custom.asp?page=principles> (accessed 25 July 2023).  
23  
24  
25 Barragan, S.P. (2019), “Information Governance Maturity Model: Should Retention be  
26 Rethought?” In *Diverse Applications and Transferability of Maturity Models*, edited by  
27 Shadrack Katuu, pp. 92-119. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.  
28  
29  
30 Barragan, S.P. (2022), “Applying bounded rationality to information disposition: development  
31 of a risk/reward heuristic”, *Records Management Journal*, Vol. 32 No. 2, pp. 170–181.  
32 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/RMJ-09-2021-0035>.  
33  
34  
35 Brown, G. and Robinson, S.L. (2008), “The Dysfunction of Territoriality in Organizations.”  
36 In *Research Companion to the Dysfunctional Workplace: Management Challenges and*  
37 *Symptoms*, edited by Janice Langan-Fox, Cary L. Cooper CBE and Richard J. Klimoski,  
38 pp. 252-367. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar Publishing.  
39  
40  
41 Chandler, K. (2022), “Reevaluating the Mission of Control in Records Management: Tools  
42 for a Staff-centered Approach”, *Records Management Journal*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 276–  
43 287. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/RMJ-05-2022-0012>.  
44  
45  
46 Christiansen, N.D. and Tett, R.P. (2008), “Toward a Better Understanding of the Role of  
47 Situations in Linking Personality, Work Behavior, and Job Performance”, *Industrial and*  
48 *Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 1, pp. 312–316.  
49  
50  
51 Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2000), “The ‘What’ and ‘Why’ of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs  
52 and the Self-Determination of Behavior”, *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 227–  
53 268.  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

- 1  
2  
3 Eisen, L.S. (2021), “Revisiting Our Views on Non-Compliance with IM Policy”, *ARMA*  
4 *Magazine*, June 1, 2021. [https://magazine.arma.org/2021/06/revisiting-our-views-on-non-](https://magazine.arma.org/2021/06/revisiting-our-views-on-non-compliance-with-im-policy/)  
5 [compliance-with-im-policy/](https://magazine.arma.org/2021/06/revisiting-our-views-on-non-compliance-with-im-policy/).  
6  
7  
8 Gagné, M. and Deci, E. L. (2007), “Intrinsic and Extrinsic Work Motivation”, Rogelberg,  
9 S.G. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, SAGE  
10 Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 368–371.  
11  
12  
13 Gesmundo, J.L., Glorioso, R.R.B., Raviz, K.J. and Apat, E.J.C. (2022), “Records  
14 Management Strategies and Professional Performance of Administrative Staff”,  
15 *International Journal of Academe and Industry Research*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 70–92.  
16 <https://doi.org/10.53378/352858>.  
17  
18  
19 Gigerenzer, G. and Goldstein, D.G. (1996), “Reasoning the Fast and Frugal Way: Models of  
20 Bounded Rationality”, *Psychological Review*, Vol. 103 No. 4, pp. 650–669. [https://doi:](https://doi:10.1037/0033-295x.103.4.650)  
21 [10.1037/0033-295x.103.4.650](https://doi:10.1037/0033-295x.103.4.650).  
22  
23  
24 Goldstein, D.G. and Gigerenzer, G. (2002), “Models of ecological rationality: The recognition  
25 heuristic.”, *Psychological Review*, Vol. 109 No. 1, pp. 75–90. [https://doi:10.1037/0033-](https://doi:10.1037/0033-295x.109.1.75)  
26 [295x.109.1.75](https://doi:10.1037/0033-295x.109.1.75).  
27  
28  
29 Hight, C. and Smith, J.W. (2016), “‘Keep This, Toss That’: Improving Records Management  
30 at an Academic Institution”, *Archival Issues*, Vol. 37 No. 2, pp. 43–58.  
31 <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1793/78515>.  
32  
33  
34 Kahn, R.A. (2004), “Records Management & Compliance: Making the Connection”,  
35 *Information Management Journal*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 29–36.  
36  
37  
38 Koppes, L.L. (2007), “History of Industrial/Organizational Psychology in North America”,  
39 Rogelberg, S.G. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, SAGE  
40 Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 312-317.  
41  
42  
43 McLeod, J. (2012), “On being part of the solution, not the problem: Taking a proportionate  
44 approach to managing records”, *Records Management Journal*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 186–  
45 197. <https://doi:10.1108/09565691211283147>.  
46  
47  
48 McLeod, J., Childs, S. and Hardiman, R. (2011), “Accelerating Positive Change in  
49 Electronic Records Management - Headline Findings from a Major Research Project”,  
50 *Archives & Manuscripts*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 66–94.  
51 <https://publications.archivists.org.au/index.php/asa/article/view/10159>  
52  
53  
54 Oliver, G. and Foscarini, F. (2020), *Recordkeeping Cultures*. 2nd ed. London, England: Facet  
55 Publishing.  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

- 1  
2  
3 Oliver, Gillian, Foscarini, F. and Evans Johanne. (2019), *Information Culture(s) Toolkit*,  
4 International Council on Archives (ICA). [https://www.ica.org/en/information-cultures-](https://www.ica.org/en/information-cultures-toolkit)  
5 [toolkit](https://www.ica.org/en/information-cultures-toolkit)  
6  
7  
8 Oliver, G., Foscarini, F., Sinclair, C., Nicholls, C., Lorient, L. and Nicholls, C. (2018),  
9 “Ethnographic sensitivity and current recordkeeping”, *Records Management Journal*,  
10 Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 175–186. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/RMJ-08-2017-0021>  
11  
12  
13 Piderit, S.K. (2000), “Rethinking Resistance and Recognizing Ambivalence: A  
14 Multidimensional View of Attitudes toward an Organizational Change”, *The Academy*  
15 *of Management Review*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 783–794. <https://doi.org/10.2307/259206>  
16  
17  
18 Pierce, J.L., Kostova, T. and Dirks, K.T. (2003), “The State of Psychological Ownership:  
19 Integrating and Extending a Century of Research”, *Review of General Psychology*, Vol.  
20 7 No. 1, pp. 84–107. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.7.1.84>  
21  
22  
23 Rogelberg, S.G. (2007), “Introduction”, Rogelberg, S.G. (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Industrial and*  
24 *Organizational Psychology*, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. xxxv-xxxvii.  
25  
26  
27 Schmieder, R.A. (2007), “Resistance to Organizational Change”, Rogelberg, S.G. (Ed.)  
28 *Encyclopedia of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, SAGE Publications,  
29 Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 543-544.  
30  
31  
32 Saffady, W. (2021), *Records and Information Management: Fundamentals of Professional*  
33 *Practice*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Maryland.  
34  
35  
36 Simon, H.A. (1997), *Administrative Behavior: a Study of Decision-Making Processes in*  
37 *Administrative Organizations*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Free Press, New York, NY.  
38  
39  
40 Sundqvist, A. and Svärd, P. (2016), “Information Culture and Records Management: A  
41 Suitable Match? Conceptualizations of Information Culture and Their Application on  
42 Records Management”, *International Journal of Information Management* 36, 9–15.  
43 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2015.08.004>.  
44  
45  
46 Svärd, P. (2011), “The interface between enterprise content management and records  
47 management in changing organizations,” Härnösand: Mid Sweden University. Licentiate  
48 Degree, No. 71.  
49  
50  
51 Van Bussel, G.J. (2020), *A Sound of Silence: Organizational Behavior and Enterprise*  
52 *Information Management*, Van Bussel Document Services, Helmond.  
53  
54  
55 Van Bussel, G.-J. (2017), “The Theoretical Framework of the ‘Archive-As-Is’: an  
56 Organization Oriented View on Archives. Part II. An Exploration of the ‘Archive-As-Is’  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 Framework”, in Smit, F., Glaudemans, A. and Jonker, R. (Eds.), *Archives in Liquid*  
4 *Times*, Vol. 17, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, pp. 42–71.  
5  
6

7 Van Dyne, L. and Pierce, J.L. (2004), “Psychological ownership and feelings of possession:  
8 three field studies predicting employee attitudes and organizational citizenship  
9 behavior”, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 439–459.  
10 <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.249>  
11  
12

13 Wang, G.G. and Sun, J.Y. (2012), “Change Management,” Rothwell, W.J. and Prescott, R.K.  
14 (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Human Resource Management*, Pfeiffer: A Wiley Imprint,  
15 San Francisco. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118364741.ch17>  
16  
17

18 Yeo, G. (2018), *Records, Information and Data*. Facet Publishing.  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60