



ICA International Council for Information Technology in Government Administration

News from the Board - March 1996, Issue 33

From the Chair

by *Frank A. McDonough*

Our 1996 conference will be the 30th annual ICA conference. It is also the millennium year in Budapest. These are both very significant milestones. Many information technology (IT) groups have been established in 30 years; few survived. ICA looks with pride to three decades of contributions made to the management of IT in member countries.

Because of these events, we plan to make the annual conference special. I ask each of you to provide suggestions on how we can celebrate these two unique milestones. Suggestions should be forwarded via Internet to **frank.mcdonough@gsa.gov**.

Center for International Information Technology, A Valuable Resource for the Exchange of Information

by *Wanda R. Kopacz*

The Center for International Information Technology (IT) was established in May 1995, in the General Services Administration. Already, it is proving to be a valuable resource for the exchange of information.

The Center, located in Frank McDonough's Office of Information Technology, is headed by Wanda R. Kopacz. Since its inception, the Center has facilitated the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and experiences in international, state, and local governments. Delegations from several governments have visited the Center in recent months. GSA managers emphasize that the two way dialogue provides good information to be used here in the US as well as to the visiting delegations. In most instances, visitors are interested in how the United States handles emerging issues such as reinvention, downsizing, performance measures, electronic commerce, and business process re-engineering. Representatives from

Australia, Canada, Denmark, Jamaica, Japan, Malta, Norway, South Korea, and Sweden have visited in recent months.

The Center is developing a concept to share practices found to be successful in state governments. These will be shared with other national governments. Frank McDonough will present this idea at ICA's Spring meeting. He said that identifying the "best of the best for the common good" continues to be a top priority in ICA.

Questions regarding the Center for International Information Technology in GSA may be directed to:

Wanda R. Kopacz, Director Telephone; 1 202 501 3410; FAX: 1 202 208 1445; **wanda.kopacz@gsa.gov**

Martha Dorris, Deputy Director; Telephone: 1 202 501 0225; FAX: 1 202 208 1445; **martha.dorris@gsa.gov**

ICA Materials in High Demand

Reflecting the continuing strong interest in ICA publications, Editor Larry Caffrey reported the following event. In late December, he sent the *Proceedings of the 29th Conference in Malta* by post to the publisher. The vehicle carrying the ICA document was hijacked at gunpoint in London.

If the culprit had been an active member in ICA, he would have received a final printed copy without the need for such an extraordinary effort.

ICA Information

by *Larry Caffrey, UK*

As this Newsletter goes to press, the *Proceedings* of the 29th ICA Conference have already been published and should be with you at this time. As usual, the *Proceedings* are published as a special issue of *ICA Information* (Issue 57).

In 1996, you will see two additional issues of *ICA Information*. Issue 58 is the eagerly awaited *ICA E-Mail Study Group Report*. The Chairman of the Group, Poul Bernt Jensen and his team have produced an excellent report which is now at the printers. Poul's team had representatives from eleven countries in four Continents. Internet played an important role in the drafting processes.

The *ICA General Issue*, the 59th in the series, is now being planned. Each year, timely articles of interest and value to all member nations are printed in this publication. An article may be new research, an update of a presentation previously given at a Conference, or a preview of an upcoming attraction. Many articles describe new work that the author believes may have a wide value. Other articles share experiences. The choice to publicize your work is one that only you can make.

In Malta, I received a number of offers of articles for the next *General Issue*. Please take this as a reminder that the target date for receipt of articles is April 7. There is still time to make a contribution to the *General Issue*.

As a guideline, articles should be between 1,000 and 5,000 words and should be sent to the editor in both electronic (3.5 inch diskette) and paper copy. It would be a great help if any illustrations or diagrams are also copied onto the diskette.

Text in WORD format is recommended but both ASCII and WordPerfect can be read without difficulty. All diskettes should be clearly labeled; and, all articles should be prefaced by a short biography of the author. An early alert advising me that an article will be provided would be appreciated. *ICA Information* is always a good value. With your help, the next *General Issue* can be the best ever.

ICA Proceedings: Simple Guidelines to Keep the Costs Down

by *Larry Caffrey, UK*

The *Proceedings* of the successful 29th ICA Conference raised some familiar issues. At the ICA Council Meeting in Malta last October, the cost of ICA publications was a major topic.

Once again, the *Proceedings* are longer and heavier than in previous years. The cost of publishing the Conference *Proceedings* is the largest single item in the ICA budget. Broadly speaking, it accounts for some 40% of income in a normal year. The 400-plus page publication will weigh over 1 kilogram.

National Representatives are requested to follow a few simple guidelines. These will make a substantial difference in the costs and in the time it takes to publish the *Proceedings*. The single most important message is to use the available technologies to reduce costs. All materials (text and diagrams/illustrations) should be provided in both electronic and paper copy. Whenever possible, use WORD or one of the widely available word processors (ASCII, WordPerfect or Ami-Pro). Keeping the Round Table reports within three to six-pages is important.

These guidelines will enable us to provide better service to you. For example, for on-time submissions, we will be able to provide electronic copies of all Round Table reports in Budapest.

New publication

by *Dr. Jose A. Castro Correia,*

Portugal

The Instituto de Informatica and the National Security Authority have published a Technical Guide *Information Systems and Technologies' Security*. This guide is a reference document for those working with IT. It provides technical information on the main issues concerning IT security.

This guide is available in Portuguese, and may be obtained (Esc.2530\$00)

from:

Instituto de Informatica,

Av. Leite de Vasconcelos,2 2720 Alfragide, Portugal.

IT Managers Meeting

by *Dr. Jose A. Castro Correia, President,*

Board of Directors,

Ministerio das Financas,

Portugal

Since 1991, Instituto de Informatica has organized annual conference, "IT an annual conference, "IT Managers Meeting." This year's conference theme was *Public Administration and the Information Society*. It was held in Tomar, Portugal, on 20-22 March 1996.

The focus was on issues raised by the construction of the information society and the definition of the role of public administration. The conference allowed the examination of the technical and financial means which will be necessary and provided an opportunity for making new contacts. ICA members interested in further information should contact

Dr. Correia via Internet at **cdin@vivaldi. telepac.pt**.

Electronic Filing: Current Possibilities and Recommendations

by *Frank Jensen* Minister of Research

and *Jytte Hilden* Minister of Culture and Information Technology, Denmark

Since January 1, 1996, the State Archives has made it possible for public institutions to introduce full electronic case administration and filing systems. Denmark has become the first country in the world where a national registry authority allows public authorities to discontinue using paper archives and introduce full electronic filing systems.

The transition to electronic case administration with the public authorities and institutions is a major element in the Danish government's *IT Political Action Plan, 1995*. The implementation of these objectives requires careful consideration of the filing of electronic documents to ensure that the archives can be used as historical documentation in the future.

Electronic case administration in government is as much a cultural and research factor as a technological challenge.

With this publication and a circular from the State Archives regarding electronic filing, Denmark is taking the first major step. Documents which are "born" electronic should also be filed electronically and not in a paper archive.

The Ministry of Research and Information Technology and the State Archives will closely follow technological change to ensure that the guidelines are adjusted on a regular basis.

The State Archives also intends to track the use of information technology in public administration. The authorities can therefore enter into special development agreements with the State Archives regarding the organization and filing of electronic materials.

This publication and the circular will help push forward the introduction of electronic case administration and filing systems and in this way help make public administration more efficient.

Copies of the publication are available on the Internet at **<http://www.fsk.dk>**.

Upcoming Conference: Information Technology Management and Organizational Innovations

The 7th annual Information Resources Management Association (IRMA) International Conference will be held in Washington, DC on May 19-22, 1996. Expected attendees include information resource managers, researchers, government sector personnel, and academics.. Over 50 sessions of panels, paper presentations, workshops and tutorials in 19 specifically-selected tracks will cover the vast issues of interest to information technology managers throughout the world. Information on IRMA or the upcoming conference is available via e-mail at **75364,3150@ compuserve.com**.

GSA Publishes New Model for Successful IT Procurement Programs

The IT Management Division recently published a booklet entitled *A Model Procurement Program: Successful IT Acquisition*.

It targets critical success factors to reform procurement programs. Used in conjunction with the Division's 1994 publication, *Transition to the Future: A Model IRM Program for the 21st Century*, the procurement model can help agencies to "reinvent" and re-engineer their operations to be more customer- and results-oriented. The publication is based primarily on direct experience in agencies in procurement and contracting programs.

The IT procurement organizations which will succeed in the future are the ones that demonstrate the leadership, flexibility and will to examine the way they do business, and the courage to change. By taking the steps outlined in the publication, procurement organizations can balance the need for effective customer service with their traditional role of enforcing compliance with law and regulations.

Both publications are available on GSA's IT Policy Home Page at **<http://www.itpolicy.gsa.gov>**.

If you have any questions regarding this publication, please contact the IT Management Division at (202) 501-1332. A limited number of paper copies is available upon request.

Controlling Information Technology Within the Swiss Federal Administration

by *Graham Tritt, Switzerland*

The Consulting Section of the Swiss Federal Office for Information Technology and Systems has been authorized to develop **Controlling** methods for applications using information technology.

By Controlling we mean a systematic and continuing process of verification and guidance, which is applied to the life-cycle in the development of an information system.

With a formal structure for Controlling Methods, the decisions which guide the development process can help ensure better management decisions.

Controlling is a tool for leadership. Successful control depends on maintaining a transparency between cause and effect. Good leadership requires taking responsibility for decisions made.

Applied in the various offices of the Swiss Federal Administration, these new methods will encourage a target-oriented management of investment in information technology.

Within a project framework, a handbook of guidelines is being created, together with a corresponding organizational structure and appropriate training courses.

Controlling is applied in parallel with each of three life-cycle phases:

- (1) strategic controlling (in the initialization phase),
- (2) project controlling (in the implementation phase), and
- (3) application or system controlling (in the operations phase).

For further information on controlling methods for applications using IT, please contact Graham Tritt via Internet at **graham.tritt@ bfi.admin.ch**.

Editor's Corner

The ICA Newsletter is a great opportunity for National Representatives to highlight accomplishments in the management and use of IT within their country. Publicity tends to be beneficial to IT programs in all countries. We are pleased to have many good contributions in this edition. You are encouraged to submit an article on your program for the June edition. A special thanks to all of those who have provided articles to date.

Martha Dorris

Guidelines for Information Technology Standards

by *Terje Dyrstad and Arne Petter Gahre, Norway*

The Royal Ministry of Government Administration in Norway has translated into English their publication titled *Guidelines for Establishing Government Standards for Information Technology (IT) in the Public Administration*. This document was originally issued in March 1995.

Standardization can foster opportunities for interaction and efficiency between government agencies at all levels. It can also provide similar opportunities with the private sector and beyond national borders.

Standardization work is especially important in the field of IT. The guidelines set forth in this document should constitute a common foundation for the work of the various stakeholders in drawing up governmental standards. The areas that are particularly appropriate for work on governmental standards are-

Data definitions and information interchange;

General requirements for government business applications;

Procurement and systems management; and

Technical infrastructure.

It is important to note that a Secretariat for IT standardization in public administration has been established. It will help coordinate standardization work, assist in drawing up proposals for governmental standards and their maintenance, and develop guidelines for Ministries.

Copies of this may be obtained by contacting either Terje or Arne via Internet at **terje.dyrstad@ ad.dep. telemax.no.** or **arne petter.gahre @ad.dep.telemax.no.**

Results of the ICA's Recent E-Mail Study Group

by *Poul Bernt Jensen, Denmark*

In Vienna, in October 1994, ICA's Council of National Representatives identified data sharing and data management as one of the top issues for the 1995 Study Group. The 1995 Study Group emphasized electronic mail as its first subject. Poul Bernt Jensen (Denmark) was elected to chair the ICA E-Mail Study Group at a meeting in Copenhagen in June 1995.

The E-Mail Study Group evaluated the status of national and international electronic mail systems, considered the organizational and technical issues involved, and recommended actions to ensure the effective use of this technology between organizations and countries. These objectives were a challenge because of the different approaches being taken in ICA Member countries. It also is complicated by the variety and incompatibility of the products, services, and systems used in each country.

E-mail was used extensively throughout this study. Ten of the 11 Study Group members had access to e-mail, either X.400, Internet or both.

E-mail was a useful tool to distribute working and final documents, make and confirm meeting arrangements, and provide comments on draft reports. E-mail provided a convenient, timely, and practical way to communicate when participants were located throughout the world.

E-mail was found to be an effective tool to support communication and exchange of information over distance and time. Extensive exchange of e-mail occurred even though some members never met in person. Friendly relationships developed easily.

This easy and informal method of communicating has real potential to support groups working across human and geographical boundaries. However, a few group members with little e-mail experience did hesitate; and, along with those without e-mail access became isolated in the Study Group's work.

It was the experience of the group that using e-mail on X.400 to X.400 and Internet to Internet protocols functioned without significant problems. File attachments were received in good condition and were easy to use. However, exchanging e-mail and binary file attachments between unlike mail protocols caused the greatest problems because of the lack of standards.

Using uuencoding and MIME protocols did overcome some of these problems. However, these required some coordination between the sender and the receiver, additional software to encode and decode messages, and more knowledge on the part of the user.

For a copy of the *E-Mail Study Group Report*, access ICA's Home Page via Internet at **<http://www.nla.gov.au/finance.ogit/ica/icahome.html>**. Comments on the report should be forwarded to Poul Bernt Jensen via Internet at **pbj@fsk.dk**.

Insights from a US Conference on Virtual Government

by Fred Sims, US

Several initiatives were highlighted in a recent conference on Virtual Government held in the United States. These initiatives are consistent with the theme of the 30th ICA Conference in Budapest.

Now at the concept and pilot stage, the Department of the Treasury is implementing a system for single point filing to reduce the reporting burden on companies. The Simplified Tax and Wage System (STAWRS) combines the requirements from the Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Department of Labor and state governments. A working model is expected by December 1996.

The US Postal Service is implementing a joint initiative between the Federal, state, and local governments to allow taxpayers to receive one-stop shopping services through personal computers and kiosks. A series of integrated services will be available that are build around a person's life. For example, when a child is born, the parents may request a birth certificate, social security number and immunization record. Information is available on the Internet at **wings.usps.gov**.

To make government services more easily available to the poor and disadvantaged who often find the complexity of government paperwork too difficult, the Social Security Administration is implementing the Georgia Common Access Project. This paper-based program consolidates the requirements of four Federal agencies, state, and local governments in the state of Georgia. The project is operating in 20 neighborhood clusters.

In the state of Oregon, citizens will be able to give their name, social security number and address and the Oregon Pathways will be able to provide information to the customer from 30 different programs in 13 Federal, state, and county agencies.

Contact Fred Sims via Internet address at **fred.sims@gsa.gov**

Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.

...Goethe

ICA News From the Board

The International Council for Information Technology in Government Administration, ICA, was founded in 1966. It promotes the informal exchange of knowledge, ideas, and experiences among central government authorities responsible for coordinating IT policy, planning, use, and evaluation. The exchange covers actions within and between governments. For this purpose, a conference is organized annually, and study groups are formed which investigate selected IT topics in depth between conferences. Reports and the Conference Proceedings as well as articles of general interest from member countries are published in the official journal *ICA Information*.

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