
CHICKEN OR PIG: WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

SOFIA EMPEL, CRM

Tennis great, Martina Navratilova, once said, “The difference between involvement and commitment is like ham and eggs. The chicken is involved; the pig is committed.” The latest ARMA International Education Foundation (AIEF) research report, *Records Management and Peer-Reviewed Journals: An Assessment* addresses the ongoing debate about the value of a North American peer-reviewed RIM journal. Where do you stand on this issue?

In the AIEF report, researchers Donald Force and Elizabeth Shaffer found the majority of respondents felt a need for a peer-reviewed RIM journal that could potentially address a wide variety of RIM-related issues, although willingness to participate in such a journal varied. If nothing else, this report starts a very important discussion among RIM professionals.

You might be asking “What is it?” and “Why should I care?” A peer-reviewed journal is a publication that uses a selection process in which only those articles that are relevant, original, rigorously researched, and well-written are published. According to author Ellen Yi-Luen Do, “These journals serve as a forum for professional intellectual exchange and as a platform to present cutting edge research. Peer review (refereed) journals give direction to the field and industry.” They allow researchers to collaborate, create or advance theories, and thus improve practice. Indeed, peer-reviewed journals have been described as a necessary component of any profession.

On the other hand, some RIM professionals believe that what works in theory doesn’t work in practice, so why bother? Another argument against such a journal is that ARMA International’s *Information Management Journal*, which is not

peer-reviewed, is good enough. Others feel the United Kingdom’s peer-reviewed *Records Management Journal* serves North American needs just fine, and publishing a journal specific to North American is unnecessary. Still others find peer-reviewed articles “boring” and question their value.

So, which are you, a chicken or a pig? Make it your business to read this report, become involved, and then commit yourself to one side of the issue or the other. The newly released study can be found on the AIEF website at <http://www.armaedfoundation.org/>.

PART VI: THE BEGINNING, NOT THE END

BY SOFIA EMPEL, CRM

Part VI is part of a journey, not the destination. Yes, CRM certification provides a baseline of knowledge that helps candidates launch themselves as records and information management (RIM) professionals. But, Part VI is more a journey in self-learning and self-improvement, than it is a test of your professional competence. And, if you want to pass Part VI, think of it as an opportunity to grow, not as a measure of your professional knowledge.

So how should you prepare for Part VI? The two most important ways are: (1) get a CRM mentor, and (2) practice, practice, practice. By passing parts 1 through 5, you’ve laid the foundation for the practical information you need to know. Now, you just have to apply the concepts correctly to a case study and communicate it clearly. And, this requires practice, lots of it.

As mini-exercises, think about certain RIM situations in general terms and write short three or four sentence blurbs to address them. Answer these questions: What is it? Why is it important? What are some common approaches? Some examples of topics are records inventory; records retention schedule; vital records; inactive files;

active files; electronic records; imaging; archival records; security; staffing; and discovery, to name a few. Not so hard, right?

Next, practice writing case studies in plain, concise business language. This doesn't mean writing to impress, but rather writing to express your thoughts in a straight-forward manner with enough detail to get your point across to an executive. Here are some resources to help you.

- *Preparing for the CRM Examination: A Handbook* (sections 2-97 and 3-32)
- *ICRM Exam Mentor Program Candidate Packet: Part VI* (search using Google)
- Exam Part 6A Study Guide (search using Google)
- ICRM Part VI workshops, chapter level with grading
- ICRM Part VI workshop, ARMA's annual conference with grading

Ideally, write your answers and have your mentor give you feedback. Grading for practice case studies is available from ICRM sponsored workshops at both the chapter and national levels. As a rule of thumb, you should write at least 3 practice case studies, with the last one being timed, before you sit for Part VI. And, throughout the process, remember...Part VI is the beginning, not the end.

ABOUT THESE ARTICLES

These reoccurring short articles are part of a series devoted in 2012 - 2013 to two very worthy organizations: ARMA International Education Foundation (AIEF) and Institute of Certified Records Managers (ICRM).

The articles represent the author's views entirely and do not reflect the opinions or views of any organization. They are written and made available as a service to the profession by the author.



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