

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALAYSIAN COMPETENCIES  
PROFILE FOR THE RECORDS MANAGER**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was undertaken with the aim to explore the competency profile of the records manager in Malaysian federal ministries. Problem statements, identified from review, include: (a) the advancement of Information & Communication Technology, (b) incompetent records managers, and (c) unavailability of Malaysian records manager competency profiles. Knowledge, skills and attitudes define competence. As the exploratory sequential approach concerns research methodology, the first phase of data collection involves contents analysis technique and on-line focus group discussions. Four competencies manual from United Kingdom, United States, Canada and Australia; and qualitative data from on-line focus groups discussions were transcribed and categorized to identify themes and patterns by applying manifest and latent coding. In the second phase, the data collected from aforementioned methods has been used to develop a survey questionnaire which drew the response of 182 Departmental Records Officer from 25 federal ministries. The mean ranking and descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. As for content analysis, two approaches have been used: quantitative and qualitative content analysis. Quantitative content analysis is concerned with assigning unit into appropriate categories and providing counts for each category, while qualitative content analysis comprises the relationship and connection between concepts. In quantitative content analysis, the frequency of reference made to the 106 sub-themes analyzed on the four manuals, indicates some variation. 42 sub-themes were identified to be referred to in only one manual, 43 sub-themes in two manuals and 13 sub-themes in three manuals. Even so, similarities were found in the 106 referred sub-themes, which were used in all the manuals. In qualitative approach, the Australian Manual was found dominant in providing guidance and information in technical competencies such as records control, creation, disposition, maintenance, outsourcing, protection and IT capabilities. In contrast, the Canadian Manual was found to be outstanding in focusing on general competencies such as business management skills as well as interpersonal and personal skills, whereas the United States Manual was found to be the most frequently referred guide used in discussing records management. Findings from on-line focus group discussions (web blog) through the manifest approach revealed ten main themes and 39 sub-themes as follows: (a) competencies, (b) principles of records management, (c) problems in managing records, (d) training and education, (e) records management practices, (f) departmental records officers, (g) archives officers, (h) heads of departments, (i) the National Archives of Malaysia, and (j) electronic records. These

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

To execute any given job, one has to have competency. Without proper and appropriate competency, a task or a job cannot be delivered efficiently and effectively. The required sets of competencies for any given job are dependent on the job specifications. The higher is the complexity of the job, the higher would be the required competencies. Hence, the required sets of competencies for a job as engineer would surely be different from those of doctors or lawyers.

Similarly, the job as records manager, would have its own sets of required competencies. In this light, developed countries such as the United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia have developed their own sets of competencies for the job as records manager. As a result, records management practices in these countries are far more advanced compared to other countries including Malaysia. A survey conducted on public organizations in Malaysia revealed that little emphasis was given to records management although records and information management is an important element in assisting to improve the performance, accountability and transparency of an organization (Wamukoya & Mutula, 2005). According to Raja Abdullah (2007) there is a lack of qualified staff in records management practices and for this reason this field needs to be emphasized and highlighted. In Malaysia, the profession of records manager is known as Departmental Records Officer (DRO), a position appointed by the Chief Secretary or Head of Department. The main responsibility of DRO is as a liaison officer of ministries, government agencies and statutory bodies with the National Archive of Malaysia. Literatures on competencies studies unveiled that numerous studies have been done investigating the competencies profiles of various professions such as librarians, healthcare professionals, IT workers, business managers, entrepreneurs, human resource managers and teachers. However, studies focusing on records manager competencies are still very limited. Against this concern, this study attempts to address this gap i.e. to investigate the competencies profile of records manager in the context of Malaysia.

### 1.2 SCENARIOS IN MALAYSIA PERTAINING TO IMPROPER RECORDS MANAGEMENT

In Malaysia, there were several cases illustrating improper records management practices.

1. The Department of Environment's File Room Fire (Utusan Malaysia, June 8, 2007). The file room of Department of Environment in Johor Bahru was burnt down and volumes of vital records were ruined and lost. The case became a national issue and was strongly debated in the Dewan Negara on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2005.
2. Lost Records in Immigration Department (BERNAMA, June 2007). Pertaining to the high-profile murder case of Mongolian model Attantuya Shaariibuu, was lost and