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BULLETIN



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PREPARING FOR THE CRM

Making the decision to pursue designation as a Certified Records Manager is no lightweight matter. Nor is it accomplished in a few weeks time. As described by ARMA (www.arma.org), the CRM is designed for experienced professionals with management-level responsibilities.

Those who take seriously their daily efforts in records and information management (RIM) will see that getting their CRM is the next step up in their career. They may have gone through a self-assessment that determined their strengths and weaknesses and which pointed to the CRM as a way to advance in their career.

Although ARMA strongly endorses the concept of CRM and produces resources that support this designation, the actual process of certification is done by ICRM, the Institute of Certified Records Managers, established in 1975 (www.icrm.org). Through its board of officers and regents with specific duties, the ICRM determines the content of the CRM exam, scheduling of the exam, and the levels of education and work experience that an applicant must have before he or she can become a candidate to take the six-part test.

At the beginning of 2008, there were over 900 CRMS plus 900 candidates waiting in the wings to take the tests. As stated by Alan A. Andolsen, CRM, CMC, current ICRM president, "The CRM has become an important, often mandatory, qualification for records management leadership positions within all types of organizations—governmental, public, and private."

Who are these brave souls who make it through Parts 1-5 (with each part having 100 multiple choice questions) as well as Part 6 which requires written essay? In the Fall of 2007, the ICRM did a demographic and salary survey of its members, with 55% responding. Here are a few snapshots of CRMs. Over 88% have bachelor's degrees and 47% have graduate level degrees. As to respondents' salaries, 51% made at least \$90,000. Those in the United States made just under



\$95,000 and in Canada the average was just over \$93,000. Some benefits include participation in a 401K or government 403b by 77%, and 74% received medical benefits. (Read more in the ICRM's online Winter 2008 newsletter.)

With the granting of the CRM come responsibilities. The newly minted CRM must adhere to the Institute's Code of Ethics, demonstrating integrity, protecting information assets, and operating in an honest manner. Moreover, a CRM must participate in the Certification Maintenance Program to continually hone professional competence while adding new skills and knowledge.

A CRM must have 100 hours of educational activities during the five-year period immediately after certification, and 100 more for each five-year period after that. Requests for credit must be submitted and then approved before the number of CRM credits is logged into the CRM's personal database. Most members do this online although requests for credit can be sent by mail as well. CRMs should frequently check to see how many hours they have accumulated so there is no frantic effort to catch up when the end of the five-year period is near.

Most major RIM conferences will have worked with the ICRM in advance to determine how many credit hours will be given to those who show proof of attending. Look for this on the web site of the sponsoring organization.

What does it take to become a candidate for the CRM exams?

Interested persons must submit a three-page application with processing fee to the Certification Standards Committee which determines if eligibility requirements have been met. Essentially the sliding scale of work experience to education is that a master's degree would require only two years of professional experience, while a high school graduate would need to show 11 years of work experience.

Merely handling records at someone else's direction does not qualify as professional work experience. The ICRM has identified eight categories of experience and a candidate must have worked in at least three of them. There are further stipulations as to level of experience, and detailed job descriptions are part of the necessary documentation to be submitted. At the discretion of the Committee, applicants may be asked to offer additional documentation by a certain date.

What's next if you are approved as a candidate?

You begin to look for ways to study for the exams. The first is to go to the ICRM website and download for free *Preparing for the CRM Examination: A Handbook*. This book has 145 detailed pages set out in three sections. The first section explains the examination process, qualifying for the exam, documenting education and work, and the process for maintaining a CRM designation.

Section 2 includes techniques for passing Parts 1—5 and eventually Part 6. Section 2 has many instructions as to “know and explain” and “be able to identify” dozens of topics and procedures. Section 3 has sample examinations and case studies.

The CRM exams are given four times a year at many locations. Parts 1-5 are given over five days. Part 6 is given on the sixth day. The actual onsite administration of the exams is conducted by Pearson VUE, an examining contractor for the ICRM.

Many local ARMA chapters have CRM study groups in which members help each other prepare for this important test. Going through this with others can be a true bonding experience, according to those who have done it. Completing the tests on Friday can be cause for a real celebration, say participants.

Not everyone breezes through Parts 1-5 on the first go-round. Some people will have to test again on a particular Part. If you have to do this, you probably won't be alone as you buckle down to get it right the second time.

There's more help available from ICRM.

For those who pass Parts 1-5 successfully, the next big step will be Part 6 which has case studies. The candidate must analyze problems and then give recommendations in clear and concise written answers. Knowing that Part 6 is the “killer exam,” the ICRM devised the “Adopt a Candidate” mentoring program in which experienced CRMs are paired with candidates to assist them with Part 6. This generous program not only assists the candidates; it also makes clear that the ICRM wants to bring in more qualified CRM members.

As a study aid, a packet of sample case study questions is sent to both the candidate and the mentor. The candidate gets experience writing answers to the case studies and the mentor critiques these as would a grader of Part 6. The packet also contains other sample responses that have been “marked up” plus advice on studying and how to tackle the big test.

Some mentors and candidates are able to meet in person. Others communicate by e-mail or fax or phone as is comfortable for both. Although the mentor program was designed to help Part 6 candidates who request a mentor, assistance will be given to persons who request help at any point in the process.

Your storage contractor may be able to put you in touch with local CRMs. One of the tenets of the Code of Ethics is that a CRM is to be supportive of those who are interested in joining the profession. You may find a mentor right there in your own home town.

ARMA International Now Accepting Education Calls for Proposals

ARMA International has opened the 2009 calls for proposals for the 2009 Collaboration and E-Discovery Seminar and ARMA International web seminars. Individuals seeking to share their experiences and education to records and information management professionals are encouraged to submit. Proposals for the 2009 ARMA International Collaboration and EDiscovery Seminar should be submitted by subject matter experts with education focused around the RIM, legal and IT fields. The deadline for these proposals is July 14, 2008.

ARMA International web seminar proposals should consist of RIM related educational content that can easily be adapted into a 60-minute asynchronous web seminar. All web seminar proposals should be received by September 30, 2008. Education should be challenging, interactive, and learner-focused. For more information or to submit your proposals visit www.arma.org/learningcenter/proposals/

Enterprise Search Frustrates and Disappoints Users

Silver Spring, MD – June 17, 2008 – In a new study on Findability to be released by AIIM, 49% of survey respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that it is a difficult and time consuming process to find the information they need to do their job. The new survey of over 500 businesses conducted in May 2008, suspects that a prime culprit for the failings of Findability in the enterprise is the admission that 69% of respondents believe that only 50% or less of their organization’s information is searchable online. Given the ready access that users are supposed to have in this “Age of Google” – how is this possible?

“Findability has been a common source of frustration in the enterprise for decades,” states AIIM Vice President Carl Frappaolo. “As information has become more and more digital, from it’s creation through to management, the pain of finding enterprise information has moved from the piles of paper on the desktop and in storage cabinets, to the digital landfill of file servers, e-mail inboxes, digital desktops, and content management systems. Despite the advances made in search on the internet, enterprise search leaves most users frustrated.” Finding content digitally is only possible if pointers to

content or the content itself is in native digital format, made available for indexing by search, and/or accessible by information organization and access techniques (such as navigational structures, taxonomies, bookmarks, etc.). The lack of such functionality in the enterprise is at the heart of user frustration.

But fault does not lie with technology solution providers. Most organizations have failed to take a strategic approach to enterprise search. 49% of respondents have “No Formal Goal” for enterprise Findability within their organizations, and a large subset of the overall research population state that when it comes to the “Criticality of Findability to their Organization’s Business Goals and Success”, 38% have no idea (“Don’t Know”) what the importance of Findability is in comparison to a mere 10% who claim Findability is “Imperative” to their organization.

The lack of strategic understanding, implemented plans and technological pros and cons to address Findability in the enterprise continues to cause pain in most organizations, although slow progress is being made.

The companion research paper, the AIIM Market IQ on Findability, will be published in July 2008, and is anticipated to be over 70 pages long, with over 50 charts/figures.

HP Acquires Tower Software

HP has taken a dip into the acquisitions market with its recent purchase of Tower Software, an Australian Enterprise Content Management Provider. But they don’t call it an ECM acquisition – rather it’s a deal that will help HP expand its reach into the ediscovery and compliance software market.

Towers Records Management Software will be integrated with HP’s existing Integrated Archive Platform providing HP deeper capabilities for managing ediscovery and compliance when collecting information. There is already an existing alliance that integrated Tower’s TRIM Context into the Integrated Active Platform.

ARMA INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION SEEKS DONATIONS FOR SILENT AUCTION FUNDRAISER

The ARMA International Educational Foundation is soliciting prizes for its upcoming silent auction, to be held at the ARMA International Conference in Las Vegas, NV, on October 20-23, 2008. The silent auction has become a significant fundraising event for the Foundation. At previous events the Foundation has received strong support from Chapters and Regions of ARMA International, individual members of ARMA International and the Institute of Certified Records Managers and long-time Foundation supporters, and vendors to the industry.

The ARMA International Educational Foundation (AIEF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that engages in research and development projects that benefit the records and information management profession. The Foundation enhances the knowledge and competency of working professionals through its funding of research, publications, scholarships and educational programs. The work of the Educational Foundation is supported by tax deductible contributions made by individuals, companies,

and organizations. Research projects completed by the Foundation are made available for free to any interested person via the Foundation's website. The Foundation is especially seeking donated prizes that are highly portable, since most conference and exposition attendees will be traveling to the conference by air. Some items that have been very popular in previous events are wine, holiday items, children's items, sports memorabilia, food items, gift certificates, electronic equipment, artwork, and books. The Foundation will provide recognition to each individual or organizational donor who contributes a prize for the auction. In addition, individuals who will be attending the ARMA International conference or exposition are encouraged to review and bid on items available in the silent auction area, which will be located on the exposition floor.

Donation forms can be found on the ARMA International Educational Foundation website, (www.armaedfoundation.org) For more information about donations contact AIEF Treasurer Phil Albert at pkalbertsr@verizon.net

Get to know BRM



Sarah Dennis (left), Marketing Assistant, interviews Marlene Hink (center) and Michele Abaray

At Business Records Management there are many people who do very important work behind the scenes. Two employees who provide great contributions are *Michele Abaray* and *Marlene Hink* at the Pittsburgh North Side Warehouse in the Quality and Inventory Control departments, respectively. They have both been with BRM for 14 years and enjoy the fact that every day brings a new challenge and always something different.

As Quality Control Supervisor, Michele downloads and uploads daily activity information to and from the drivers' scanners at all BRM locations into the system and checks them line by line to ensure that everything is accurately entered. It then goes to Marlene in Inventory Control who double checks it for an additional level

of accuracy. They also verify boxes that are going to destruction to confirm that the correct information is inside, and print out all of the file folder archives and box barcodes.

These are positions that require great attention to detail, and BRM is committed to the safety and accuracy of our clients' information.

Michele and Marlene are most thankful for their coworkers who make them laugh and smile on a daily basis and make their work day a little brighter.

In their spare time, Michele enjoys going to Sandcastle Waterpark, shopping and spending time with her six-year-old nephew, Jameson. She also enjoys walking, exercising and going to the beach. Marlene likes to spend her time at the Meadows Racetrack or taking trips to Atlantic City. She's not a big table games player, but enjoys the slot machines and wins occasionally. She also likes to spend time with her three cats, Sadie, Sobad and Siegfried.

Congratulations eNewsletter 2nd Quarter Winners

Congratulations to *Amy Dewalt* of the University of Pittsburgh and *Andy Neski* of Security Systems of America. They both won 4 tickets to the Pittsburgh Zoo/PPG Aquarium.
On behalf of everyone at BRM, thanks again and we hope you have a great time!

