



The ACT Territory Records Act [\[1\]](#) came into being in 2002 following government election commitments, stemming from a number of high profile records management incidents.

The Act provided for the formation of the ACT Territory Records Office, tasked with the responsibility of producing standards and guidelines and providing recordkeeping assistance and advice to agencies.

Early work priorities for the Territory Records Office included:

- Establishing a Government-wide approach to records management
- Developing education and training for records management practitioners
- Preparing a strategy for dealing with electronic records
- Enabling access by the public to the records of government.

Adoption of Standards for Records Management (firstly AS4390, then AS/ISO 15489) provided the foundations for a government wide approach to recordkeeping.

As an integral part of the recordkeeping process, ACT government agencies must use a thesaurus, which is a controlled language system, to title their records. The thesaurus must be based on functions and activities sourced

through an analysis of business activity[\[2\]](#).

Disposition of records must be controlled using approved disposition schedules. Agencies must develop their own function based disposition schedules and submit them for approval to the Territory Records Advisory Council. The Territory Records Office has adapted the DIRKS methodology and requires Territory agencies to complete a five step process before Records Disposal Schedules can be approved and implemented[\[3\]](#).

The Territory Records Office realised that it would take several years to develop government wide thesauri and disposition schedules as they only had 2 staff members assigned to undertake the work. They needed a tool to support the process and as the project commenced, they researched the market and found a.k.a.<sup>®</sup> - a software tool that had just been released onto the market.

a.k.a.<sup>®</sup> was developed by Synercon Management Consulting- a consulting practice specialising in developing thesauri and disposition schedules. Synercon needed an industrial strength tool that was simple to use, supported the DIRKS methodology and published a wide range of outputs including reports and HTML output. As they were unable to find an existing thesaurus tool to match their specifications, they decided to build their own software tools. The timing for the Territory Records Office could not have been better.

In their first full year of operation, the Territory Records Office produced a whole-of-government thesaurus for titling the records of the common administrative functions of government (TVKAAA[\[4\]](#)) and a Records Disposal Schedule (TARDiS) to accompany this thesaurus was also approved. In addition, 10 Records Disposal

Schedules for the disposal of Territory Records were created and approved. Over the next three years another 45 records disposition schedules was built and approved covering 145 functions of government[5].

Since 2003 a.k.a.® software has been used extensively by the Territory Records Office.

The TVKAAA thesaurus and TARDiS Disposition Schedule were created in and continue to be managed in a.k.a.®. Online versions of both instruments are published from a.k.a.® to the ACT Intranet using templates developed by Synercon. a.k.a.® allows for sources of terms, legislation, stakeholders, and recordkeeping requirements to be captured and published.

All agency thesauri and disposition schedules are created using a.k.a.® and the a.k.a.® database file is submitted to the Territory Records Office as part of the approval process. A customised XML template has been developed by Synercon to enable the rapid publication of approved disposition schedules in MS Word and PDF format.

a.k.a.® databases are also used as the sources of terms for the electronic file request form[6].

Through the use of a.k.a.® software the Territory Records Office have been able to quickly implement many of their key responsibilities:

They have developed and implemented government wide recordkeeping instruments in a very short space of time with limited resources.

They have supported agencies in their development of recordkeeping

instruments. a.k.a.® has provided a referential framework for agency staff to work within so that standards are adhered to and maintained.

A.k.a.® enables the Territory Records Office to undertake regular reviews of government recordkeeping instruments with limited resources.

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[1] Territory Records Act 2002  
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2002-18/default.asp>

[2] Standard for Records Management Number 3: Records Description and Control Approval 2009 (No 1)  
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2009-13/current/pdf/2009-13.pdf>

[3] Standard for Records Management Number 2: Appraisal Approval 2009 (No 1)  
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2009-12/current/pdf/2009-12.pdf>

[4] Keyword AAA was developed by NSW for their use and is used under licence from the State Records Authority of NSW.

[5] Territory Records Office Annual Reports  
[www.territoryrecords.act.gov.au](http://www.territoryrecords.act.gov.au)

[6] What is a.k.a.® and why do we use it? Records Advice No 19.  
[http://www.territoryrecords.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/55880/Records\\_advice\\_No.19\\_-\\_What\\_is\\_aka\\_14\\_Feb\\_08.pdf](http://www.territoryrecords.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/55880/Records_advice_No.19_-_What_is_aka_14_Feb_08.pdf)



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