

Keeping Trustworthy Digital Records Over Time: An Increasingly Cloudy Issue

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Abstract

This presentation will identify the salient differences between digital and traditional records as forms of writing, and will discuss the issues related to the authentic preservation of digital records over the long term. In the digital environment authenticity is an inference based on foundation evidence. To presume it through a contextual assessment, verify it through comparison or demonstration, or declare it through authentication requires trust in the reputation, performance, and competence of the keeper or preserver of the digital entities at issue. However, it also requires transparency and accountability, supported by a strong legal framework. Such framework can be based on the principles of diplomatics and archival science, as recommended by two international research projects, the Digital Records Forensics (DRF) Project and the International research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES) Project, whose conceptual findings will be outlined. The presentation will be concluded by demonstrating how the concepts outlined can be used to assess the viability of a cloud environment for recordkeeping and preservation.

Biography

Luciana Duranti is Chair of the Archival Studies master's and doctoral programs at the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies of the University of British Columbia, and a Professor of archival theory, diplomatics, and the management of digital records. She is also Affiliate Full Professor of the iSchool of the University of Washington. Dr. Duranti is Project-Director of InterPARES (1998-2012), the largest research project on the long-term preservation of authentic electronic records; and principal investigator in a research project on Digital Records Forensics (2008-2011), and in a research project examining issues of copyright and long-term preservation in the context of universities institutional digital repositories (2009-2011). She is developing education modules for trusted digital records professionals for the International Council on Archives; is active nationally and internationally in several archival associations and in boards and committees, such as the Italy's National Commission for Archives (2007-2013) and the UNESCO International Advisory Committee of the Memory of the World Program (2007-2015); and has been the President of the Society of American Archivists (1998-99), of which she is a Fellow. She publishes widely on archival theory and diplomatics.