

The InterPARES Project

Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary Research:
Impact and Lessons Learned

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InterPARES Project

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Project Director

InterPARES Research Goal

To develop the theoretical and methodological knowledge essential to the permanent preservation of authentic records generated and/or maintained electronically, and, on the basis of this knowledge, to formulate model policies, strategies and standards capable of ensuring that preservation.



InterPARES

- **Original Title: Long-Term Preservation of Authentic Electronic Records**
- **Among Peers**
- **InterPARES: INTernational Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems**



InterPARES 1: 1999-2001

- Major Funding from SSHRC, NHPRC, UBC, NARA, NAC
- 13 countries in 4 continents, 60 researchers
- Public and private sector
- Professionals and academics (ratio 80% to 20%)
- Archival science, diplomatics and records management, plus computer science and engineering, jurisprudence, research methods



InterPARES 2: 2002-2006

- Major funding from SSHRC, NHPRC, NSF, UBC
- 25 countries in 5 continents, 100 researchers
- Public and private sectors
- Academics and professionals (20% to 80%)
- Archival science, diplomatics and records management; music theory, composition, performance; film theory, production, description; dance and theatre theory; a variety of hard and social sciences methodologies; jurisprudence; computer science and engineering



Personal Lessons Learned Issues

- Cultural
- Terminological
- Financial
- Collaborative
- Logistic
- Production related



Cultural Issues

Differences linked to nationality, discipline, profession, and sector, addressed through

- face to face week-long research workshops
- mixed composition of research units
- dissemination of work in each other's environment



Terminological issues

Differences in national, disciplinary, organizational, professional, sectorial languages, and within each, addressed through

- Intellectual Framework including basic concepts
- annotated bibliographies in each area
- translation of research questions, methodologies, and any other key document in lay terms
- terminology database, register of words and phrases, glossary, dictionary, thesaurus



Financial Issues

Differences in funding and related demands on the project among participating teams and individual co-investigators, addressed through

- assignment of responsibilities based on reasons for the received funding, ability to fulfill them within the financial constraints, and complementarities with other research carried out in each given environment
- use of part of the funding for the direction of the project to support the travel/work/technological needs of foreign individual researchers
- establishment of a technological infrastructure that supports team work through the internet



Collaboration issues

Differences in agenda between the private and the public sector, academics and professionals, seasoned and younger researchers, ... addressed through

- choice of research units chairs
- Organizational Policy



Organizational Policy (20 pages)

Categories of membership, responsibilities of members, admission of new members

Research units structure and responsibilities

Management units and their responsibilities

Workshops purpose, schedule, attendance, voting procedures, sponsorship

Publication, authorship, collaborative research, intellectual property guidelines, dissemination

Website policy, maintenance of data and research material, human subject and data protection



Logistic issues

Organization of research workshops in different cities and countries, assignment of research assistants to individuals and groups, maintenance of an effective web site accessible only to the researchers and of a public one, building and maintenance of a technological infrastructure usable by people in places with different technological capability, creating and distributing publicity, etc., addressed through

- The InterPARES central office staff
- The national Teams staff
- The good will of individual researchers



Production Issues 1

Overcoming differences in motivation, commitment, interest, financial and organizational support, availability of time and resources

Coordinating the many portions of a research that might turn out unwieldy towards the specific objectives of the project producing timely and consistent results

addressed through



Production Issues 2

- constant communication with clear definition of timelines and assignment of both team and individual responsibilities (calendar and milestones document)
- redirection of resources
- definition of tasks tailored on the person/organization
- discussion of problems in meetings of all chairs
- Advisory Board
- diplomacy, flattery...whatever works



Critical Success Factors

- The large amount of dissemination carried out by researchers and students
- The timeliness of the results
- The substantial development of new knowledge, especially theoretical and methodological, and refinement and adaptation of traditional knowledge
- The applicability of the findings to a variety of contexts
- **Mostly: Each researcher feels that his/her contribution to the project is such that the results belong to him/her as much as to the group**



Impact for SLAIS

- PhD program
- A fourth full time archival position
- Increasing number of applicants, especially international
- Creation of exchange programs
- Increased competitiveness of our graduates, especially in the international arena
- Increased attention of the University administration for the individual professors involved and for the program



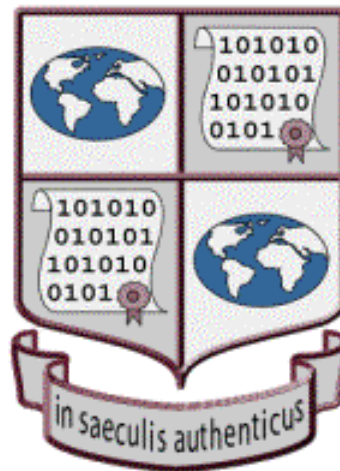
Impact for the discipline

- The creation of a large network of scholars in a variety of fields (from computer engineering to law) who are now focusing on the issues that are at the core of the archival discipline
- The transformation of the issues dealt with by InterPARES in a catalyst that has brought together archival professionals who did not share much before: e.g., moving image archivists and public records archivists, music archivists and scientific records archivists
- The realization that, regardless of the medium and of the challenges brought about by technological changes, archival theory and diplomatics are what will guide us to development of the right practices for the control of the new records



Reference

<http://www.interpares.org>



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