



# **The Joys and Pains of International and Multidisciplinary Collaboration:**

## **The InterPARES Project**



**InterPARES Project**

Dr. Luciana Duranti  
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.



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# InterPARES

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



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# InterPARES 1: 1999 (really 1998)-2001

- 13 countries in 4 continents, 60 researchers
- Public and private sector
- Professionals and academics
- Archival science, diplomatics and records management, plus computer science and engineering, jurisprudence, research methods



# InterPARES 2: 2002 (really 2001)-2006

- 25 countries in 5 continents, 100 researchers
- Public and private sectors
- Academics and professionals
- 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



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# 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



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# Collaboration issues

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

- organizational policy
- choice of research units chairs
- diplomacy



# 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

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



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# Production Issues 2

- constant communication with clear definition of timelines and assignment of both team and individual responsibilities (calendar and milestones document)
- provision of extra resources
- definition of tasks tailored on the person/organization
- discussion of problems in International Team meetings
- special section in the organizational policy
- Advisory Board
- diplomacy, flattery...whatever works



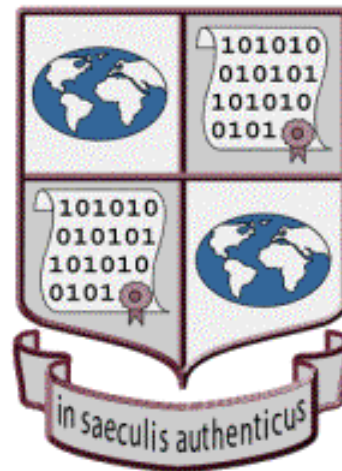
# Pains and Joys

- The pains: the process of building a system that works, and the necessary (but increasingly rarer) interventions with individual researchers who forget deadlines
- The joys: to watch a real team working together, one in which each researcher is proud of the project's accomplishments and feels them as his/her own, is able and willing to disseminate its findings competently and creatively to his/her cultural, disciplinary, organizational community, and takes the initiative to develop parallel lines of research that stem from his/her work in the project.



# Reference

<http://www.interpares.org>



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