



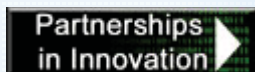
## Electronic Records Archives (ERA)

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## Remarks, NARA Press Conference,

*September 8, 2005*

### **Kenneth Thibodeau, Director, Electronic Records Archives Program**

The Electronic Records Archives Program has come a long way to reach the milestone we achieve today. We have changed a lot along the way, but one of the things that has been and will remain stable is our emphasis on collaboration.

We started in 1998 as a joint research project with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency and the Patent and Trademark Office, and went on to form lasting alliances with the National Science Foundation, the Army Research Laboratory, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Through such alliances we have tapped the knowledge and abilities of world-class researchers in institutions such as the San Diego Supercomputer Center, the Georgia Tech Research Institute, the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, the University of Maryland, the InterPARES project, and others. We need to extend our alliances into the future to face both continuing changes in information technology, profound and open-ended changes technology enables in our society, culture, businesses and, of course, our government.

Today, I have the pleasure of announcing a new partnership. Professor Weinstein has established an Advisory Committee on the Electronic Records Archives to advise and make recommendations to him on issues related to the development, implementation and use of the ERA system. As we move forward to making the Electronic Records Archives a reality, it is more important than ever that we reach out to obtain advice from a broad spectrum of relevant expertise and interests. The Advisory Committee will provide an ongoing structure for bringing together experts in computer science and information technology, archival science and records management, information science, the law, history, genealogy, and education.

While we are still in the process of forming the committee, several people have accepted our invitation to serve on the committee, and several members are with us this morning. I would like to introduce them to you: Laura Campbell, Associate Librarian for Strategic Initiatives, the Library of Congress, Dr. David Carmichael, State Archivist of Georgia and President of the Council of State Archivists, Jerry Handfield, State Archivist of Washington and member of the board of the Council of State Archivists, Richard Pearce-Moses, Director of Digital Government Information at the Arizona State Library and Archives and President of the Society of American Archivists, and Jonathan Redgrave, partner at Jones Day and Chair of the Sedona Working Group on Best Practices for Electronic Document Retention and Production. The full roster of members will be posted on our web site, once it is finalized.

Before the Archivist announces the company which will build the ERA system, it is appropriate that we give the floor to one of our collaborators, a man whose work has been seminal both in shaping the challenge of electronic records and in showing ways to address it. I have the pleasure and the honor to introduce to you Dr. Robert Kahn, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National Research Initiatives. It was Dr. Kahn's work, with his colleague, Vinton Cerf, which more than any other single achievement unleashed the potential of information technology to change the world. The significance of their work was recognized by the Association for Computing Machinery in 2004 with its most prestigious award, the Turing Award, "for pioneering work on internetworking, including the design and implementation of the Internet's basic communications protocols, TCP/IP, and for inspired leadership in networking." Dr. Kahn's seminal role in making information readily available across the barriers of space inspires the National Archives and our many colleagues who need to move uniquely valuable electronic records across the barrier of time.

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