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Features

University and the World Helps Preserve Electronic Records

By Lisa James

Philip Eppard, dean of the School of Information Science and Policy, will be the principal investigator and director on a grant for the American component of an international research project on the preservation of electronic records.



Philip Eppard

The grant, from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, a grant-funding agency of the National Archives and Records Administration, is authorized for \$425,000 for 18 months. Anne Gilliland-Swetland of the department of library and information science at UCLA will serve as co-director of the grant project.

The project, known as the InterPARES Project (International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems) will investigate and develop the theories and methodologies required for the permanent preservation of authentic electronic records. "We have a rather ambitious set of goals for this project," Eppard said. "Ultimately, we aim to formulate model policies, strategies and standards for ensuring that authentic electronic records will be preserved over long periods of time."

The University is the American headquarters for InterPARES, a three-year collaborative project based at the University of British Columbia. It involves teams of researchers from Canada, the U.S., Italy, the United Kingdom, Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden, Japan, China, and Hong Kong.

In the U.S., faculty and researchers at UCLA, the University of Missouri, Georgia Tech, and Penn State are all involved in the project in collaboration with electronic records specialists at the National Archives in Washington D.C. Researchers from other countries will be working with representatives from their respective national archives as well.

In addition, the Collaborative Electronic Notebook Systems Association, representing a worldwide industry group including pharmaceutical, chemical, biotechnology, high-tech, and other businesses who are interested in developing electronic lab notebooks, is participating in the research.

Because of the fragility of the medium and changes in hardware and software, the task of preservation is formidable. Records will need to be moved to different platforms or software packages in order to be maintained permanently, but throughout these processes, there will need to be an assurance that the records are as authentic as they were when they were first created.

"This project is distinctive in that it brings together archivists, records managers, preservation

experts, and computer engineers from around the world to deal with what is a worldwide problem," Eppard said. "If our project is successful, people who need to access information from records created electronically in the 1990s will have a guarantee that those important electronic records have survived and are authentic."

Who Shares the Reins on Reindeer Herding?

By Greta Petry

In some parts of the world, reindeer are important every day of the year, not just when Santa Claus is in town.

This summer, Robert Jarvenpa, professor and chair of the Department of Anthropology, and Hetty Jo Brumbach, associate curator of Anthropology, will be traveling to a part of the world where people rely on reindeer as a source of income and food. Their destination is Finnish Lapland, where the land is unsuitable for farming. Small clusters of families make their living by hunting, trapping, fishing, and selling furs.

One of the topics the researchers will be studying is gender roles in the herding and management of reindeer. Later in the summer, Jarvenpa and Brumbach will do comparative work with Alaskan Inupiaq peoples in the Bering Strait, where small clusters of families make their living by fishing and sea mammal hunting.

Jarvenpa has been studying circumpolar hunting and foraging peoples, beginning with the Han and Chipewyan Indians in northern Canada, since 1970. He spent his first year there as an apprentice hunter, sleeping in temperatures of 50 degrees below zero and eating whatever his group could hunt, fish or trap. Brumbach spent her first summer among the Chipewyan in 1975.

"We were anxious to pack in as much research as possible, so we worked from sunup to sundown," said Brumbach. "That meant we were working 20 hours a day. We also traveled by canoe much of the time. It was exhausting. There were no roads in this part of the world until 1977, and we were following the people's traditional travel circuits which covered vast distances."

Brumbach and Jarvenpa are principal co-investigators of a project called Gender Dynamics and Subsistence Systems in Circumpolar Societies: an Ethnoarchaeological Interpretation. The study is funded by a \$204,500 National Science Foundation grant.

This summer the researchers, three teams of international consultants, and Albany anthropology graduate student Scott Williams will join the Saami people of Lapland and the Inupiaq, Eskimo people living on Little Diomed Island in Alaska, in the Bering Strait.

Next summer, the work will conclude among the Khanty people of western Siberia, with the goal of examining how labor is divided between males and females in that culture.

These can be critical questions in economies where the ability to work interdependently as a couple and in an extended family is key to economic survival.

Brumbach, as an archaeologist, and Jarvenpa, a cultural anthropologist, each adds a unique perspective to this question of gender roles in subsistence economies.