

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

### **Canadian Group Spearheads International Electronic Records Research.**

VANCOUVER, British Columbia. October 1, 1998 – A Canadian group of researchers based out of the University of British Columbia's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies will spearhead a three-year, collaborative research initiative that will investigate the archival preservation of electronic records. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council has just awarded the InterPARES Project (International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems) a \$1.1 million grant to fund the activities of a Canadian working group and to direct the international activities of collaborating participants from the United States, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Australia. The SSHRC grant is backed by a further \$9 million in funding commitment from the international participants which include academic institutions, national archival institutions, and private industry groups.

The collaborative nature of this research is driven by the ubiquity and urgency of the problems related to the permanent preservation of electronically generated records. After the Year 2000 bug, it is perhaps one of the greatest dilemmas brought on by the modern information age. Everyday, governments, corporations and individuals around the world produce terabytes of information to conduct their affairs. As with their paper analogues, many of these electronic records will need to be preserved over the long-term for operational, legal, or historical reasons. However, the constantly evolving nature of electronic systems means that many electronically generated records risk being stranded in obsolescent, incompatible technologies. Furthermore, as by-products of their transactions and daily activities, records are the primary means by which governments, organizations and individuals are held accountable for their actions. However, given their electronic form, the task of proving the authenticity of these records is made more difficult. Finally, unlike paper-based records which have a very long life span if properly preserved, electronic records are stored on relatively fragile media which calls for rigorous media migration that, again, risks the long-term accessibility and authenticity of the electronic records.

The INTERPARES Project will address these significant issues. It is the second phase of a recently completed U.B.C. research project, "The Preservation of the Integrity of Electronic Records," which investigated requirements for *active* electronic recordkeeping systems from an archival perspective. The so-called "U.B.C. Project" garnered international attention that eventually translated into the widespread collaboration of the INTERPARES Project. According to project director, Luciana Duranti, the goal of the INTERPARES research will be "to develop the theoretical and methodological knowledge essential to the permanent preservation of electronically generated records, and, on the basis of this knowledge, to formulate model policies, strategies, and standards capable of ensuring their preservation." Duranti realizes that this is no small task. Over the past decade, archival institutions have been struggling to rescue or maintain the increasing number of electronic records created by the agencies which they support. Rapidly changing technologies, the

wide variety of electronic systems in use and limited resources have resulted in case-by-case stop-gap solutions.

Quote- Duranti, The INTERPARES Project represents (systematic effort, experts from archives/computer science disciplines, on-the-ground testing)

Quote- NAC....

Although preliminary working meetings have been held, the INTERPARES Project will be officially launched on January 1, 1999 and run through to January 1, 2001. The project website can be found at *www.InterPARES.org*. For additional information on the INTERPARES project, contact the project coordinator, Peter Van Garderen. TEL (604) 822-2694 FAX (604) 822-6006 EMAIL [peter.v@intergate.bc.ca](mailto:peter.v@intergate.bc.ca).