

Website Exhibit Case Study

Accuracy, authenticity and reliability in an e-government environment

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Introduction

Archival institutions increasingly use web technology as an outreach tool. A popular form of this outreach is website exhibits, which are business records of the archives and can be considered experiential in nature. This poster summarizes the on-going research of one case study conducted within the context of the InterPARES 2 Project. The study examined how two government archives ensure the accuracy, authenticity and reliability of web exhibits.

Methodology

Structured interviews were conducted within two government archives and included the following interviewees: 4 curators, 2 managers, 2 imaging technicians, and 2 website coordinators.

The interview questions, developed from the 23 research questions central to the InterPARES 2 Project, explored the following contexts of creation: provenancial, juridical-administrative, procedural, documentary, and technological

An annotated bibliography of literature relating to four areas of interest was developed: (1) the creation process and business requirements of website exhibits; (2) web exhibit user demographics, requirements and preferences; (3) web exhibit evaluations from the creator's point of view; and (4) preservation, authenticity and record-keeping issues related to website exhibits.

Definitions

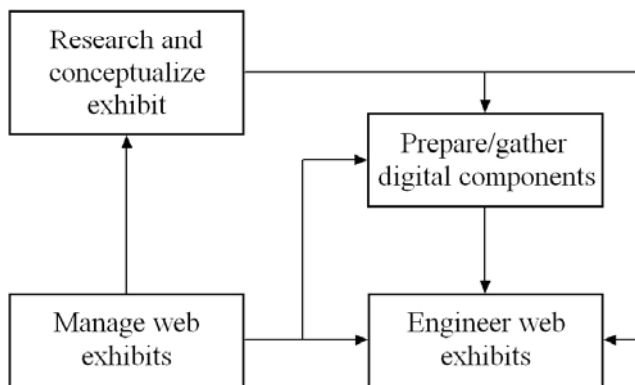
Accuracy is the degree to which data, information, documents or records are precise, correct, truthful, free of error or distortion, or pertinent to the matter.

Authenticity is the trustworthiness of a record as a record.

Reliability is the trustworthiness of a record as a statement of fact. It exists when a record can stand for the fact it is about, and is established by examining the completeness of the record's form and the amount of control exercised on the process of its creation.

Experiential Record is a record produced, used and maintained in a system that immerses the user in a sensory experience.

InterPARES 2 Glossary



High-level diagram of website exhibit creation process

"The Toys" exhibit accessed using a 17-inch color monitor and MS Internet Explorer, v.6, browser and using a cell phone and non-graphical browser.



Preliminary Conclusions

Website exhibit creation appears to be an emerging business process, which can include a variety of policies and procedures, either formal or informal and either required or suggested, that will impact the final product. As an emerging process, the current focus of website creation appears to be on the academic research principles and technical aspects involved in creating the website and not on the business requirements fulfilled by the records.

The research suggests that accuracy (content) is based on academic principles and skilled scanners; authenticity is based on limited access rights and security processes and technologies; and reliability is based on research and a relationship with a descriptive database. While it is evident that the user's platform affects what is experienced within a website, more analysis needs to be done to determine whether the accuracy, authenticity and reliability of a website exhibit is affected by the user's platform.

For more information

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