InterPARES 3 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

TEAM Canada

InterPARES 3 Project Submission to ARMA – "Implications of Web-Based, Collaborative Technologies in Records Management"

Submission To: ARMA (standards@armaintl.org)
On: Implications of Web-Based, Collaborative Technologies in Records Management
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Introduction

The relative infancy, and the ephemeral and varied nature of web-based collaborative technologies make them a unique challenge for all aspects of records management and archival work, including long-term preservation. Research into digital records has proven that to effectively ensure the authenticity and reliability of such records, preservation actions must be considered at the time of their creation. Although this can be effectively accomplished in traditional record creating environments, such tasks become difficult to impossible when the context of creation is decentralized and dispersed across time and space, as is the case with many externally-directed applications that allow for web-based collaboration.

Because the potential exists not just for information, but also records to be created and reside within externally-directed web-based collaborative environments, it is necessary for organizations to be aware of those records that are potentially being created in these environments and to establish policies, procedures and mechanisms to ensure the authenticity[1] and reliability[2] of these records.

Knowledge Contribution of the InterPARES Project

The International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES) is a SSHRC-funded, multidisciplinary project that aims to develop the knowledge essential for the long-term preservation of authentic records created and/or maintained in digital form and provide the basis for standards, policies, strategies and plans of action capable of ensuring the longevity of such material and the ability of its users to trust its authenticity.

[1] InterPARES defines authenticity as: "The trustworthiness of a record as a record; i.e., the quality of a record that is what it purports to be and that is free from tampering or corruption."
[2] InterPARES defines reliability as: "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."

The InterPARES research began in 1999 and will continue through 2012.[3] It has developed through three phases. InterPARES 1 focused on the preservation of the authenticity of digital records that are no longer needed by the creating body to fulfill its own mandate, mission or purpose. The records examined were primarily textual documents produced and maintained in databases and document management systems. This phase produced conceptual requirements for authenticity and methods for the selection and preservation of authentic digital records.[4]

The focus of InterPARES 2 was to develop and articulate the concepts, principles, criteria and methods that can ensure the creation and maintenance of accurate and reliable records and the long-term preservation of authentic records in the context of artistic, scientific and government activities that are conducted using experiential, interactive and dynamic computer technologies. This research addressed the challenge presented by the manipulability and incompatibility of digital systems, technological obsolescence, and media fragility to guarantee that society's digitally recorded memory will be accessible to future generations.

The current phase, InterPARES 3, builds upon the findings of the first two, as well as on other digital preservation projects worldwide. It aims to put theory into practice by working with small and medium-sized or low resources organizations internationally across sectors to implement the findings of the projects mentioned above, with the goal of creating trustworthy digital records that can be maintained and preserved authentic and reliable over the long term.

Web-Based collaborative technologies and long-term preservation

Because of the widespread growth in use of web-based collaborative technologies, both inside and outside of the organization, for communication, collaboration and potential record creation, the Web-Based Collaborative Technologies standard must take into account the long-term preservation requirements of the content that is created using these technologies.

Digital preservation strategies that stress the importance of ensuring authenticity, reliability and accessibility are necessary to ensure the long-term preservation of authentic and reliable records that are of value to the organization and other users in the future. Additionally, the collaborative and participatory nature of these technologies is such that traditional means of controlling the context of creation and capture may not be applicable in many circumstances.

5.4 Principle of Protection

Requirements

In response to #1: The organization's policies should also make clear distinctions around ownership of intellectual property between employee and employers. For example, does the content of a blog that an employee creates in the course of his/her duties belong to the employee

[3] The InterPARES 1 Project built on the findings of a previous research project, entitled The Preservation of the Integrity of Electronic Records, otherwise known as the UBC Project. Undertaken by researchers at the University of British Columbia from 1994 to 1997, the UBC Project was a collaboration with the United States Department of Defense, and aimed at establishing standards for creating reliable electronic records and maintaining their authenticity during their active and semi-active life. One of its products was DoD Standard 5015.2 for recordkeeping systems.

[4] All findings are presented in a book entitled The Long-term Preservation of Authentic Electronic Records: Findings of the InterPARES Project.

or to the organization? An organization's policies should clearly outline the rules around intellectual property created in web-based collaborative environments.

In response to #2: Many organizations are utilizing web-based collaborative technologies to conduct official, as well as unofficial business of the organization. Employees who are required to utilize these technologies in carrying out their duties do so on behalf of the organization. As such, if the statements made by employees in the course of their duties are the official voice of the organization, the responsibility for such statements should be shared by the organization.

6.6 Processes and Controls

6.6.1 Capturing and Preserving Records

Procedural and documentary controls are required to ensure that records are captured in a controlled environment before they are preserved for the long term.

Organizations should take into account their level of risk, undertaking a risk analysis that addresses the needs of the organization, when deciding which strategy to employ for the capture and preservation of records created with these technologies.

In-house creation and capture of records prior to exporting them to a web-collaboration or social networking site goes against the participatory and collaborative nature of these technologies. The assumption is that an organization would be utilizing these technologies to take advantage of their ability to enhance participation and collaboration; therefore, undermining this would potentially negate any benefits derived from utilizing these technologies.

6.9 Auditing and Evaluation

The draft standard states: "Regular audits and reviews of how the organization implements web-based, collaborative technologies are vital to ensure the ongoing effectiveness, usefulness, and applicability of utilizing such tools for records management purposes." To ensure the authenticity and reliability of the records preserved for the long term, controls over their capture must be established and maintained over time. The capturing and declaring of records in/from web-based collaborative or social networking sites should be added to the suggested key auditing and reviewing functions.

We recommend that a definition of "capture" be provided in section 4: *Terms and Definitions* to ensure a comprehensive meaning of the term across environments.