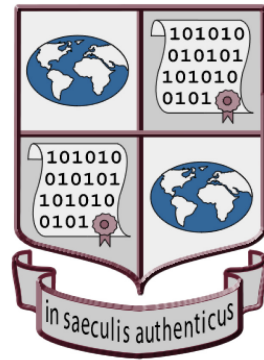


# InterPARES Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems



**Educating the eXtreme  
Archivist: Is It Possible?**

**Malta, CITRA 2009**



# Justinian 1565

“The magistrate is to store the records choosing someone to have custody over them so that they may remain uncorrupted and may be found quickly by those requiring them.”

*Codex Juris Civilis*

The custodian protects the authenticity of the record and ensures its prompt accessibility



# Baldassarre Bonifacio 1632

“It would be in vain to store writings in any place if the care and diligence of man did not ward off the injuries of time....order is certainly to be kept in archives. Then let us prepare indices and syllabi, let us make up lists and catalogues in alphabetic order.”

## *De Archivis*

The custodian protects the records ensuring their physical preservation, arranges them, and prepares descriptive instruments



# Giovanni Vittani 1913-Eugenio Casanova 1928

## Sir Hilary Jenkinson 1949

“An archival school must not have the pretence of creating the complete archivist, but must make the student able to continue his education while working in any kind of archives. This is obtainable by reducing the curricula to those components that are really essential. If students understand principles and methods, when dealing with different materials in different institutions, they are supported by the analogy of various situations.” Vittani, “La formazione dell’archivista”

“There is always the risk of demanding and doing too little or presenting exaggerated pretensions.” Casanova, “Archivistica”

“I become more and more convinced that the apparent complexity of our jack-of-all-trades profession...can be resolved quite simply if we attach ourselves firmly to a few primary and unchanging essentials.” Jenkinson, “Roots”



# Gordon Dodds 1975-76

“The complete archivist raids areas of knowledge and skills far beyond the traditionally allotted confines. Survival plainly encourages this”

Among these areas Dodds lists: records management, law, computer science, management.

From the CORE of archival knowledge to the fields that can be brought to bear on the archival endeavour

What happened? The identity of the archivist began shifting and has not stopped since



# One Identity or More?

Old debate: traditional archivist versus digital archivist;  
historical archivist versus records professional.

Recent debate: professional archivist versus archival scholar;  
generalist towards specialist.

The old debate has been resolved by external factors (e.g. lack of financial, human and knowledge resources) in favour of maintaining the unity of the profession, resulting in different emphases of different programs

The new debate is a harder one to resolve because of the pressure of universities, and of various professional communities who ask for dedicated graduate education



# Education Principles Agreed Upon

- Archivists must be educated in the core knowledge that identifies their profession
- Archivist must be educated in international standards as well as in the specific, local and unique aspects of the records of the juridical-administrative environment in which they will work
- Archivists must be educated in the practical and scholarly nature of archival work



# New Demands on Archivists

1. To position him/herself at the **beginning of the record life-cycle**, advising on the design of records systems and taking the role of “designated” trusted custodian
2. To develop **policies for records creators as well as their own institutions**
3. To assess the **authenticity of the records** and **monitor it** throughout their existence





# New Demands on Archivists (cont.)

4. To identify the records to be preserved at the moment of their creation and to **monitor their transformation through time**
5. To determine the **feasibility of preservation** of the records on the basis of the archives technological capacity
6. To determines general **preservation strategies and specific action plans**
7. To control the **accuracy of the records** after each conversion or migration



# New Demands on Archivists (cont.)

8. To develop **procedures** that address issues of **intellectual rights and privacy**
9. To develop **archival descriptions** having a **primary authentication function**, but also **retrieval and access, outreach and dissemination functions**
10. To be constantly **involved in research and development projects** similar to those carried out by the industry



# The Extreme Archivist

Our graduates today are asked to fulfill the roles of

- Traditional archivist (the minority)
- Digital Archivist
- Digital Forensic expert
- Record Manager
- Information Systems Designer/manager
- Information and Privacy Officer
- Records and Information policies manager
- Records and Information staff trainer
- Records and Archives Manager



# Is it Possible?

According to our founding fathers, yes, by creating a **generalist**

Except: employers do not want generalists, but **specialists**

Then, no, it is not possible, unless we plan to deliver 4 year long graduate programs

What is the alternative?



# Streams

In the context of a 2 year graduate program with 4 streams: a) general archival, b) digital preservation, c) records and information management, d) records forensics

1<sup>st</sup> term—a core common to every student

2<sup>nd</sup> term—a required core for each stream

Summer internship or co-op

3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> term electives among all offerings



# Example

**Common Core:** archival and diplomatics theory, records management, appraisal, arrangement and description

**Stream 1 (archival) core:** juridical-administrative context, advanced arrangement and description, public service, history of archives and the profession

**Stream 2 (digital preservation) core:** digital preservation theory and methods, digital records systems, database and semi-structured data systems design, standards and research

**Stream 3 (records management) core:** records making and recordkeeping systems design, advanced records management theories and methods, records and the law (e.g. evidence law, e-discovery, privacy), financial records

**Stream 4 (records forensics) core:** digital forensics theory and method, technology foundations for forensic professionals\*, evidence law, foundations of organizational information assurance\*\*



# Example (cont.)

## Electives (2<sup>nd</sup> year)

- All stream core courses of the other streams
- Conservation (physical)
- Digitization programs
- Archival Research and Scholarship
- Advanced Diplomatics
- Management Of Audio-Visual And Non-Textual Archives
- Administering Freedom of Information and Privacy Legislation
- Management theory and methods
- Understanding organizational culture
- Archives and the law (e.g. copyright, moral rights)
- Internships, co-op, directed studies, directed research, thesis



# Advantages of a Streams Program

- It is flexible: depending on the school/department and who is served by it, the streams can be completely different (e.g. the Italians might like a medieval archivist stream, with all the philological disciplines as stream core)
- It issues a graduate degree with certificate of specialization (i.e. it satisfies the professions that require their name on their title: records managers, digital forensic experts)
- It can issue a generalist degree, if the student chooses to take courses across streams





# Advantages of a Streams Program (cont.)

- It can be a professional degree and an academic degree, depending on the emphasis chosen by the individual student
- It allows for interdisciplinary collaborations with other faculties on campus (e.g. computer science, law) and other universities (through students exchanges)
- It can still educate the eXtreme archivist, a professional who can take it all in three years and survive!



# Conclusions

## The proposal I presented results from

- 10 years of research identifying the competences needed to deal with the challenges presented by contemporary records, and the professional profiles that fulfil such needs
- The educational demands of professions growing stronger: records managers and digital forensics
- The demands of academia, which expects to educate scholars active in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary environments
- The need for scholarly writings on leading edge concepts capable of expanding and enriching the archival discipline, and
- The need for passing on archival and diplomatic knowledge to professions that badly need it...what better way than infiltrating them...this is where the eXtreme archivist would work best!



# Thank you!

## InterPARES

[www.interpares.org](http://www.interpares.org)

## Digital Records Forensics

[www.digitalrecordsforensics.org](http://www.digitalrecordsforensics.org)

## Universities Institutional Repositories

<http://uir-preservation.org>

