How to Preserve a Million Digital Records When Everyone has a Million Other Things to Worry About

CORINNE ROGERS AND ELIZABETH SHAFFER

Abstract: How do you preserve digital records in a million-dollar organization when everyone has a million other things to worry about? This case study presents a synthesis of archival and organizational theory to inform policy and procedures development for long-term preservation of digital records in an established post-secondary institution with 16,000 full-time and 32,000 part-time students. We discuss the process of documenting current practices and developing policy that embraces best practices and seeks to implement change in today’s reality of cutbacks and unique particularities of organizational culture. Offering practical solutions to policy development for digital records preservation, we present a model that integrates archival requirements into a dynamic and complex environment. This is a case study in InterPARES 3 (International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems). The InterPARES 1 and 2 projects have researched theory and methods ensuring the preservation of the authenticity of digital records and their reliability and accuracy during the entire lifecycle from creation to permanent preservation. InterPARES 3 puts theory into practice, through case studies with archives and archives / records units in organizations. The project is funded by The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada’s Community-University Research Alliances (SSHRC-CURA). (This presentation presents in detail the model of policy development summarized in the poster presented at the SAA 2010 Student Poster Session.)

About the authors:

Corinne Rogers is a PhD student at the University of British Columbia in the School of Library and Information Studies under the supervision of Dr. Luciana Duranti. Her area of research is in establishing the requirements for preservation of authenticity of digital evidence over time. She works as a graduate research assistant on the Digital Records Forensics Project, focusing on management of digital evidence by law enforcement and the courts.

Elizabeth Shaffer is a doctoral student at the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia under the supervision of Dr. Luciana Duranti. Her research interests include social media, privacy, and copyright and intellectual property. She is a graduate research assistant on InterPARES 3 (International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems) and the University Institutional Repositories Copyright and Long-term Preservation projects.
How do you preserve a million records when everyone has a million other things to worry about?
Development of Policy and Procedures for the Long-term Preservation of Digital Records
InterPARES 3 Case Study: BCIT
Elizabeth Shaffer & Corinne Rogers

Research Methodology

Abstract

We employed case study methodology, using semi-structured interviews and participatory and iterative analysis between researchers and subjects.

Identify challenges & issues
existing policies insufficient for current needs; organizational culture

Reflect & revise
seek feedback from researchers, revise

Take action
draft policy & procedures

Gather data
study existing policies; conduct interviews

Analyze
analyze interview data; analyze business context

Synthesize
create procedures development tool; synthesize data & research knowledge

Procedures Development Tool

IP2 Creator Guideline

Accessibility

Digital Records Preservation Policy (new)
- Make records or business with IT & IT infrastructure
- Make records or business with IT & IT infrastructure
- Make records or business with IT & IT infrastructure
- Make records or business with IT & IT infrastructure

Access

- Make records or business with IT & IT infrastructure
- Make records or business with IT & IT infrastructure
- Make records or business with IT & IT infrastructure
- Make records or business with IT & IT infrastructure

Fixity

Identity

Integrity

Organization

Authentication

Protection

Backup

Obsolescence

Awareness

Challenges

Access

- Make records or business with IT & IT infrastructure
- Make records or business with IT & IT infrastructure
- Make records or business with IT & IT infrastructure
- Make records or business with IT & IT infrastructure

Accessibility

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Fixity

Identity

Integrity

Organization

Authentication

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Backup

Obsolescence

Awareness

Next Steps

• A generic template for the development of procedures based on the matrix developed for this case study will be created for use in other sites;
• Implementation of policy and procedures will be tested in key business units throughout BCIT;
• Review existing records management and archives policies and procedures and update as necessary to align with new policy and procedures.

References & Acknowledgments

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