
The InterPARES Glossary

*A controlled vocabulary of terms
used in the InterPARES Project*

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The InterPARES Glossary

The goal of the InterPARES Project is to develop the theoretical and methodological knowledge essential to the permanent preservation of electronically generated records. On the basis of this knowledge, its many international participants will work together to draft principles that can guide the development of international, national, and organizational strategies, policies and standards for the long-term preservation of authentic electronic records.

The primary purpose of the InterPARES Glossary is to facilitate the communication of ideas and research findings by clearly defining key terminology that is used within the InterPARES Project. The glossary is an alphabetical list of terms along with their definitions, scope notes and equivalence relationships. The InterPARES Glossary contains terms that are used in InterPARES research materials. This glossary is not intended to be a comprehensive vocabulary of all archival or electronic records terminology.

The glossary is managed by the InterPARES Glossary Committee. Committee members will nominate new terms and term record revisions on behalf of InterPARES Researchers. To propose a new term for entry into the glossary, InterPARES Researchers draft New Term Proposals. To request a revision to a term record, InterPARES Researchers draft Term Record Revision Requests.

The Glossary Committee manages the workflow and data needed to construct, maintain and publish the glossary using the InterPARES Glossary System. This system consists of a Technical Coordinator, research assistants, documented procedures and a database application that stores glossary terms, definitions, source citations and term administrative histories. The entities, functions and term style format rules of the InterPARES Glossary System are based on *ISO 5964: Documentation – Guidelines for the establishment and development of multilingual thesauri* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

The InterPARES Glossary is published by the InterPARES Project. The latest version of the InterPARES Glossary can be accessed on the project's website at: <http://www.interpares.org/resources/>. For more information, contact:

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To facilitate the clear transfer of knowledge and ideas beyond the InterPARES Project, all users of this glossary are encouraged to copy terms and term definitions in their entirety as long as a clear source citation is made.

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action

The conscious exercise of will by an officer of the records creator or by an external person aimed to create, maintain, modify or extinguish situations.

action, indication of USE 'indication of action'

active record

A record needed by its creator for the purpose of carrying out actions.

addressee USE 'name of addressee'

affix

To store on a medium.

annotation

Additions made to an existing record, either as part of the formal execution phase of an administrative procedure, or for the purpose of handling the business matter to which the record relates, or for records management purposes.

annotation made in the course of executing the record

An addition made to the record, after its creation, as part of the document execution phase of an administrative procedure.

annotation made in the course of handling the business matter to which the record relates

An addition made to the record in the course of handling the business matter in which the record participates, which reflect actions taken subsequent to the creation of the record for the purpose of handling the activity or the matter in which the record participates.

annotation made in the course of managing the record for records management purposes

An addition to the record made in the course of handling the record itself. It reflects actions taken subsequent to the creation of the record for the purpose of managing it as part of the agency's records.

archival bond

The link that each record has with the previous and subsequent one participating in the same activity. It is originary (i.e., it comes into existence when a record is made or received), necessary (i.e., it exists for every record), and determined (i.e., it is characterized by the purpose of the record).

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archival date

The date on which a record is officially incorporated into the creator's records.

archival document USE 'record'

archival fonds

The whole of the records of a creator.

archives

1. The whole of the records of a creator.
 2. An agency or institution responsible for the preservation and communication of records selected for permanent preservation.
 3. A place in which records selected for permanent preservation are kept.
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attachment, indication of USE 'indication of attachment'

attestation

The written validation of a record by those who took part in the issuing of it (author, writer, countersigner) and by witnesses to the action or to the signing of the record.

audit trail

A means of tracking all the interactions with records within an electronic system so that any access to the system can be documented as it occurs for the purpose of preventing unauthorized actions in relation to the records.

authentic record

A record that can be proved to be what it purports to be; that is free from tampering or corruption.

authentication certificate of trusted third party

An attestation issued by a trusted third party for the purpose of authenticating the ownership and characteristics of a public key.

authenticity

The quality of any record that relates to its integrity and to the certainty of its purported identity.

author USE 'name of author'

chronological date

The date (and, possibly, the time of day) of the record, included in the record by its author, or by the electronic system on the author's behalf, in the course of its compilation.

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class

A subdivision of a classification scheme and the concrete body of records corresponding to it.

class code

The component of the classification code that uniquely identifies the class to which a record belongs.

classification code

1. A series of alphabetical, numerical, or alphanumeric symbols used to identify the record in its documentary context.
 2. The code that identifies the record in its documentary context.
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classification scheme

Diagram, table, or other representation categorizing the creator's records by hierarchical classes and according to a coding system expressed in alphabetical, numerical, or alphanumeric symbols.

classify records

To assign records to the pre-established classes in the classification scheme and, within each class, to the dossiers to which they belong (if applicable), by attaching to each record a classification code.

competence

A sphere of functional responsibility entrusted to an office.

competent person

The office which is given a competence and has, therefore, the authority and capacity to act within it.

completeness

The characteristic of a record that refers to the presence within it of all the elements required by the creator and the juridical system for it to be capable of generating consequences.

context

The framework in which the action in which the record participates takes place. The types of context include juridical-administrative context, provenancial context, procedural context, documentary context, and technological context.

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conventional written languages

The body of words, signs, or symbols (vocabulary) and the methods and rules of combining them (syntax and grammar) that are understood by a particular community in an agreed upon manner.

corroboration

The explicit mention of the means used to validate the record.

create records

To make and set aside or receive and set aside records.

creator USE 'name of creator'

custody

The physical and legal control over the existence, authenticity, location and accessibility of records.

data

The smallest meaningful facts.

description of action

The presentation of the ideal motivation (preamble) and the concrete reason (exposition) for the action, and of the action or matter itself (disposition).

destroy inactive records

To obliterate inactive records from existence without reasonable hope of recovery.

digital time-stamp issued by a trusted third party

An attestation by a trusted third party that a record was sent at a particular point in time.

diplomatics

The study of the genesis, inner constitution and transmission of archival documents, and of their relationship with the facts represented in them and with their creator.

document

Recorded information.

documentary context

The archival fonds to which the record belongs and its internal structure.

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documentary form

The rules of representation according to which the content of a record, its administrative and documentary context, and its authority are communicated. The two types of documentary form are 'extrinsic elements of documentary form' and 'intrinsic elements of documentary form.'

dossier

An interrelated aggregation of records, constituted according to the person, action, or matter to which it refers.

dossier identifier

The means used to uniquely identify the dossier in which the record belongs.

draft number

The unique identifier assigned to sequential draft versions of the same record. The draft number is added to the record when it is stored.

electronic record

A record that is created (made or received and set aside) in electronic form.

electronic signature

A digital mark having the function of a signature in, attached to, or logically associated with the record, which is used by a signatory to take responsibility or give consent to the content of the record.

extrinsic element of documentary form

An element of a record that constitutes its external appearance. The types of extrinsic elements of documentary form include presentation features, electronic signatures, electronic seals, digital time-stamps issued by a trusted third party, and special signs.

folder

A cover in which non-electronic records, belonging in the same dossier, are loosely kept, usually in chronological order. A dossier may be distributed across a number of folders.

form USE 'documentary form'

function

All of the activities aimed to accomplish one purpose, considered abstractly.

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graphic

A representation of an object or outline of a figure, plan, or sketch by means of lines; a representation of an object formed by drawing.

image

An artificial imitation or representation of the external form of any object, or an optical appearance or counterpart of an object, such as is produced by rays of light, refracted as through a lens, or falling on a surface after passing through a small aperture.

inactive records

Records which are no longer needed for ongoing agency business.

indication of action

The subject line(s) and/or the title at the top of the record.

indication of attachment

The mention of autonomous items that have been linked inextricably to the record before transmission (i.e., added during its execution) in order for it to accomplish its purpose.

intrinsic elements of documentary form

1. The elements of a record that constitute its internal composition. The types of intrinsic elements of documentary form include name of author, name of originator, chronological date, name of place of origin of record, name of addressee(s), name of receiver(s), indication of action (matter), name of writer, corroboration, attestation, and qualification of signature.
 2. The elements of a record that convey the action in which the record participates and its immediate context.
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juridical person

An entity having the capacity or the potential to act legally and constituted either by a succession or collection of physical persons or a collection of properties.

juridical-administrative context

The legal and organizational system in which the creating body belongs.

languages, (human) natural

The body of words, signs, or symbols (vocabulary) and the methods and rules of combining them (syntax and grammar) which are understood by a particular community in an agreed upon manner. Examples of human languages are English, French, Italian, Latin. More specifically, human languages include vocabulary and phraseology belonging to a particular field or discipline, e.g., the language of law, medicine, geography, chemistry.

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languages, conventional written USE 'conventional human languages'

medium

A physical carrier.

medium of creation

The medium on which a record, made or received, is set aside for further action or reference.

medium of storage

The medium on which a record is affixed, when it is different from the medium of creation.

mode of transmission

The method by which a record is communicated over space or time.

name of addressee

The name of the physical or juridical person(s) to whom the record is directed or for whom the record is intended.

name of author

The name of the physical or juridical person having the authority and capacity to issue the record or in whose name or by whose command the record has been issued.

name of creator

The name of the physical or juridical person in whose archival fonds the record exist.

name of handling office

The office with the authority and capacity for treating an action or matter.

name of originator

The name of the person assigned the electronic address in which the record has been generated and/or sent.

name of place of origin

The name of the geographic place where the record was generated, included in the content of the record by the author or in the electronic system on the author's behalf.

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name of receiver

The name of the physical or juridical person(s) to whom the record is copied for information purposes.

name of writer

The name of the physical or juridical person having the authority and capacity to articulate the content of the record.

needed source records

A source record after conversion which, instead of being destroyed, is returned to storage as a semiactive record.

originator USE 'name of originator'

physical form

The characteristics of the external appearance of the record.

priority of transmission

Indication of the priority in which a record is to be transmitted.

procedural context

The business procedure in the course of which the record is created.

procedure

In general, the body of written and unwritten rules governing the conduct of a transaction, or the formal steps undertaken in carrying out a transaction. In particular, the legislative machinery set up to carry out a given transaction.

provenancial context

The creating body, its mandate, structure and functions.

qualification of signature

The mention of the title, capacity and/or address of the persons signing a record.

receiver USE 'name of receiver'

record

A document made or received and set aside in the course of a practical activity.

record item identifier

The component of the classification code that corresponds to the progressive number of the record within the dossier or, in the absence of dossiers, within the specific class.

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script

A set of perceivable features (graphic, aural, visual) generated by means of encoding and program instructions and capable, when used individually or in combination, to present a message to our senses.

technological context

The characteristics of the technical components of an electronic computing system in which records are created.

transmission, form of

The form that the record has when it is received.

validate

To grant official sanction to by marking.

writer USE 'name of writer'