

---

# **The InterPARES Glossary**

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

Number 2000.3  
December 1, 2000

© University of British Columbia. Vancouver, Canada.

# 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:

InterPARES Project  
School of Library, Archival and Information Studies  
University of British Columbia  
1956 Main Mall  
Vancouver, Canada V6T 1Z1  
(604) 822-2694  
[www.interpares.org](http://www.interpares.org)

To facilitate the dear 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.

Multiple copies of the entire InterPARES Glossary may be made and distributed for educational purposes only. The InterPARES Glossary copyright is held by the University of British Columbia on behalf of the InterPARES Project.

# The InterPARES Glossary

---

## **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.

---

## **active record**

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

---

## **affix**

To store on a medium.

---

## **annotation**

An addition made to a record after it has been created. See also: execution annotation; business matter annotation; record management annotation.

---

## **archival bond**

The relationship that links each record, incrementally, to the previous and subsequent ones and to all those which participate in the same activity. It is originary (i.e., it comes into existence when a record is made or received and set aside), necessary (i.e., it exists for every record), and determined (i.e., it is characterized by the purpose of the record).

---

## **archival date**

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

---

## **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.

# The InterPARES Glossary

---

## **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 is what it purports to be and 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. It appears in conjunction with the digital signature of the author of a record, and is itself digitally signed by the trusted third party.

---

## **business matter annotation**

An addition made to a record in the course of handling the business matter in which the record participates, that 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.

---

## **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.

---

## **class**

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

# The InterPARES Glossary

---

## **class code**

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

---

## **classification code**

A series of alphabetical, numerical, or alphanumeric symbols used to identify the record in its documentary context.

---

## **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.

---

# The InterPARES Glossary

---

## **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.

---

## **creation medium**

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

---

## **custody**

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

---

## **data**

The smallest meaningful facts.

---

## **description of action**

A presentation of the ideal motivation (the preamble) and the concrete reason (the exposition) for an action, as well as the action or matter itself (the 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 received at a certain 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.

# The InterPARES Glossary

---

## **document**

Recorded information.

---

## **documentary context**

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

---

## **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 and intrinsic elements.

---

## **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 seal**

A specific means of authenticating a record or ensuring that is opened only by the intended addressee. A type of electronic signature. An example of an electronic seal is a digital signature, which is an electronic signature based on public key cryptography.

# The InterPARES Glossary

---

## **electronic signature**

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

---

## **execution annotation**

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

---

## **extrinsic elements**

An element of a record that constitutes its external appearance. The types of extrinsic elements 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.

---

## **function**

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

---

## **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. A subset of image is moving images, which are visual images, with or without sound, that, when viewed, present the illusion of motion.

---

## **inactive records**

Records which are no longer needed for ongoing agency business.

---



# The InterPARES Glossary

---

## **indication of action**

The subject line(s) and/or the title at the top of a 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**

1. The elements of a record that constitute its internal composition. The types of intrinsic elements 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.
- 

## **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.

---

## **medium**

A physical carrier.

---

## **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.

---

# The InterPARES Glossary

---

## **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.

---

## **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.

# The InterPARES Glossary

---

## **overall presentation**

The record's overall information configuration, i.e. the manner in which content is presented to the senses, using text, image or sound, either alone or in combination.

---

## **presentation features**

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. Presentation features include overall presentation and specific presentation features.

---

## **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.

---

## **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.

# The InterPARES Glossary

---

## **record management annotation**

An addition to a 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 an agency's records.

---

## **sound**

An aural representation of words, music, or any other manifestation of sound.

---

## **special sign**

A symbol, such as a digital watermark, or a logo or crest of an organization, that identifies one or more persons involved in the compilation, receipt, or execution of a record.

---

## **specific presentation features**

The specific aspects of the record's formal presentation that are necessary for it to achieve the purpose for which it was created.

---

## **storage medium**

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

---

## **technological context**

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

---

## **text**

A word, number, or symbol.

---

## **transmission, form of**

The form that the record has when it is received.

---

## **validate**

To grant official sanction to by marking.

---