InterPARES 3 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

TEAM Canada

General Study Research Proposal
Open Source Records Management Software

Version 1.1, 22 November 2009

Background and Rationale for Study

Discussions at InterPARES 3 TEAM Canada Plenary sessions have highlighted the need for a general case study to identify open source records management software and map the functionality of the software to the InterPARES Creator and Preserver Guidelines. Records management and archival standards, MoReq2, ISAD(G) and ISO 15489, also are relevant to any serious consideration of records management software.

Two TEAM Canada case studies currently underway in InterPARES 3 are using, will seek or will consider open source solutions for their records management. These case studies are CS15 - cIRcle Institutional Repository: (cIRcle) Policies, Guidelines and Procedures for Management and Preservation of Digital Assets Deposited into an Institutional Repository; and CS13 - Vancouver School of Theology: (VST) Policies and Procedures for Creation, Management and Preservation of Administrative Digital Records. A general case study of available open source RM options and their functionality will facilitate these case studies.

Several open source software applications for records management do exist. Alfresco, the first provider of open source content management software, is one such example.

In September 2006, Alfresco Software Inc., announced their new product, Alfresco Records Manager, in preview release. "A shared drive interface behind Alfresco's Intelligent Virtual File System supports the necessary rules to implement the file plan, archival, disposition and scheduled events."[1] Alfresco Records Manager (2006) offered the following functionality:

- Fileplans - Automatically classify and schedule records based upon pre-existing plans and standardized structures.
- Drag And Drop Entry - Providing a file system view, records can be dragged and dropped using the standard Windows Explorer interface with metadata and disposition assigned according to fileplans and workflow handling.

[1] "Alfresco Launches First Open Source Records Management Solution," Market Wire, September 2006, available at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_pwwi/is_200609/ai_n16716227/.

- Automated Lifecycle Change - Enables schedule, content and metadata change activation based upon simple scripting rules. An important feature for managing retention dates and managing document disposition.
- Retention and Archival Policies - Manage archival of obsolete records, recovery of archived records or complete destruction of records based upon retention policies.
- Disposition - Provides controlled and scheduled handling of archiving, holds, transfers, accessions and destruction using rules and automated processing.
- Pre-Population Of Metadata - Using predefined templates and definitions, automatically file and handle records entry.
- Screening Records - Pre-defined reports and metadata type definitions to search and screen records due for handling and exceptional cases.
- DOD 5015.2 Requirements - Templates designed to support US Department of Defense records and filing requirement for metadata definitions, fileplans and functionality.
- Metadata Validation And Workflow Handling - Ensures the integrity of records using model-driven validation and handling of newly entered records.
- Automatic Conversion -Converts from proprietary office formats to long-term vendor neutral formats such as Open Document Format (ODF) and Portable Document Format (PDF).[2]

On October 14, 2009, Alfresco Software announced imminent release of its records management module, which has recently received DoD 5015.02 standard certifications. The DoD standard defines the operational, legislative and regulatory requirements that must be met by records management application products acquired by the DoD. The new module (expected release by the end of 2009) will offer:

- Enhanced permissions model based on user capabilities and roles;
- Full record lifecycles based on disposal schedules;
- Support for complex transfers;
- Support for Vital Records and their reviews;
- Search, workflow and hold tools to comply with transparency and Freedom of Information Act regulations;
- Ability to create a Hold record for legal or litigation; and,
- Saved searches to enhance user's ability to find and manage records.[3]

An important open source records management software development project (2004-2007) is DISSCO, which supports "basic administrative processes within scientific institutions… [and] incorporate[s] document management and workflow functionalities on the one hand, and interface with an archives management application on the other.."[4] According to its website, DISSCO complies with ISO 15489, the Model Requirements for Electronic Records Management Systems and the General International Standard Archival Description.

[2] Ibid.
[3] Paula Rooney, "Alfresco debuts D0D-certified records management module," Dana Blankenghorn & Paula Rooney, available at http://blogs.zdnet.com/open-source/?p=5022.
[4] DISSCO, "Objectives," available at http://www.meteo.be/DISSCO/objectives.html.

Research Methodology

The proposed study will involve a search for and features review of available software, a literature review of installations and evaluations, and a mapping of functionality to the InterPARES Creator and Preserver Guidelines, and records management and archival standards, MoReq2, ISAD(G) and ISO 15489.

Research Benefits

The proposed study will provide a valuable summary resource of available open source records management options, and will offer timely information for consideration by several InterPARES 3 case studies.

Research Team

Research Partner: Evelyn McLellan
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Proposed Timeline

Proposal – TEAM Canada Plenary, November 2009
Research – December, 2009-April 2010
Draft Report – presented to TEAM Canada Plenary, May 2010