InterPARES 2 Project
International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

Diplomatic Analysis

Case Study 10:
The Danube Exodus

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INTRODUCTION

The InterPARES 2 case study 10, *The Danube Exodus: The Rippling Currents of the River*, was conducted to examine the creation, maintenance and preservation of an interactive art exhibit displayed at the Getty Research Institute in 2002. This collaborative project is a multi-media interactive installation consisting of three inter-related components in the following order: physical exhibits and text (i.e., maps and drawings), an interactive multi-media installation, and one sixty minute video called *The Danube Exodus*. Despite the concern over what type of preservation is required (i.e., the "intent" of the work, the digital entities/environments of the work, or to have metadata document the intent), this analysis will assume the purpose of preserving *Danube Exodus* is to be able to re-create the interactive multi-media installation in the future (long-term).

The purpose of the diplomatic analysis is to assess the status of the identified digital entity as a record. Once the status of the digital entity has been determined, preservation strategies may be proposed by Domain 3.

IDENTIFICATION OF RECORD(S)

A record, as defined by the InterPARES glossary, is a document made or received and set aside in the course of a practical activity. A record must also possess all of the following five components, as established by InterPARES 1 research conclusions: fixed content and form, embedded action, archival bond, persons and contexts. The application of the definition of a record to the creator's digital entities is therefore analyzed according to the following parameters:

1. To be identified as a record, the digital entity must possess fixed content and form,[1] and be affixed to a stable medium (or physical carrier).

The records resulting from the process of creating *Danube Exodus* possess fixed content and documentary form in that Forgács stores his notes on zip drives and two hard drives, the Hungarian Centre for Culture and Communication (C^3) migrates both video and multi-media works, and the Getty exhibitions department backs up records on a CD.[2]

2. A record must also participate in an action, defined as the conscious exercise of will by an officer of the creator or by an external person, aimed to create, maintain, modify or extinguish situations. A record results as an unintended by-product or product of the action.

The overall act of *Danube Exodus* is the creation of a complex multimedia installation. The act of creating *Danube Exodus* can be broken down into administration, preparation, multimedia authoring, video editing and creating a Web-enabled database.[3]

3. A record must possess an archival bond, which is the relationship that links each record to the previous and subsequent record of the same action and, incrementally, to all the records which participate in the same activity. The archival bond 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).

Each component of *Danube Exodus* has an intellectual bond with one another which have to be present together for the exhibition to take place. It is possible that there is an implied physical bond among each of the separated components, but on the other hand, each subject does not carry out a formal recordkeeping system and therefore the internal bonds of each individual component may be viewed as broken.

4. Record creation must involve at least three persons, whether or not they explicitly appear in the record itself. These persons are the author, addressee and writer; in the electronic environment, one must also take into account two additional necessary persons: the creator and the originator.

- The record's **author** is 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.

  Danube Exodus is a joint project; therefore, there are four authors in *Danube Exodus*, which include: Peter Forgács, C^3, The Getty Research Institute, and the Labyrinth Project.

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[1] The InterPARES1 Authenticity Task Force has defined fixed form as the following: 1) binary content of the record, including indicators of documentary form, must be stored in a manner that ensures it remains complete and unaltered, and 2) technology must be maintained and procedures defined and enforced to ensure that the content is presented or rendered with the same documentary form it had when set aside. (See ATF Research Methodology Statement, available at: http://www.interpares.org/documents/interpares_ResearchMethodologyStatement.pdf).
[2] However, it may be argued that the records may be viewed as fluid in that it is an interactive component of visitors recording their reactions to the exhibit on an interactive database.
[3] Refer to Case Study 10, "Areas that Should be Covered," p. 4.

- The **addressee** the physical or juridical person(s) to whom the record is directed or for whom the record is intended.

  As *Danube Exodus* is intended to be an interactive installation to be viewed and experienced, the visitors that see the exhibit are the addressee.

- The **writer** is the physical or juridical person having the authority and capacity to articulate the content of the record.

  The overall concept of *Danube Exodus* was conceived by filmmaker and artist Peter Forgács; however, the entire work as a whole is written individually by each co-author based on skill. Through the eyes of Forgács, C[3] created documentary databases (Web site); the Getty Research Institute provided text, materials, physical and technical equipment and the gallery space; and the Labyrinth Project programmed and conceived of the interactive multimedia installation.[4]

- The **creator** is the person in whose fonds the record exists.

  [Editor's note: Not identified.]

- The **originator** is the person to whom the Internet account issuing or the server holding the record belongs.

  [Editor's note: Not identified.]

5. Finally, a record must possess an identifiable context, defined as the framework in which the action in which the record participates takes place. The types of context include juridical-administrative, provenancial, procedural, documentary, and technological.

- The **juridical-administrative context** is the legal and organizational system in which the creating body belongs.

  The project is subject to legal issues/constraints such as copyright, copyleft, and intellectual property. These issues are additionally compounded by adjusting to new regulations of Hungary entering the European Union.

- The **provenancial context** refers to the creating body, its mandate, structure and functions.

  Although the vision of the *Danube Exodus* is through the eyes of Forgács, he collaborated closely with the Getty Research Institute, the Labyrinth Project staff, and C[3]—together, Forgács and the other contributors, must be considered to be the provenancial context.

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[4] In the eyes of Forgács, the visitor may also be viewed as the writer in how they interact with the exhibit (i.e., contribute to the interactive database).

- The **procedural context** comprises the business procedure in the course of which the record is created.

  It may be concluded that there is no rigid procedure in creating *Danube Exodus* except that each contributor has their own way of creating their contribution, which depended on the project's circumstances (i.e., collaborating with the other partner organizations).

  [Editor's note: Analysis of the **procedural phases** was not carried out for this case study.]

- The **documentary context** is defined as the archival fonds to which a record belongs and its internal structure.

  The records of *Danube Exodus* are possibly incomplete and are each held somewhat informally by each contributor. Forgács has kept and stored extensive notes of the project. The Open Society Archives of Central European University are holding video copies of the films used in the project. The records created by the Getty Institution (correspondence, planning documents, meeting agendas, and scholarly text) are stored by the Exhibition Department which organizes according to exhibition. Records created by Labyrinth Projects (such as work files, rendered files, supporting records) are organized and stored according to the exhibition. At the moment, it is difficult to comprehend how C^3 organizes and stores their records of this project but do know that documenting contemporary Hungarian Art is of concern.

- **The technological context** is defined as the characteristics of the technological components of an electronic computing system in which records are created.

  Forgács uses a PC for administrative tasks[5] but uses a Mac to perform film editing which is backed up onto zip drive and two hard drives. The Labyrinth Project also uses a Mac but backs up projects onto an archival server which has restricted access; on the other hand, administrative records are maybe stored on personal hard drives or possibly not at all. The Getty (exhibitions department) is PC based and backs up selected documents[6] onto an unsecured central drive with tape backup followed by occasional CD backup. C^3 provides a Web site which has not been updated and provides internet access to various (educational) institutions. C^3 works in a mixed technical environment using Silicon Graphics, Mac and PC workstations.

CONCLUSIONS

The resulting diplomatic analysis of the *Danube Exodus* reveals that the exhibit itself and its interactive database is not a record because it is an end-product. Rather, records are created in the process of creating the exhibit such as Forgács's notes, the installation of the exhibit, and the collaboration among the various contributors: The Labyrinth Project, C^3, and the Getty Research Institute. It is difficult to ascertain whether or not it will be possible to re-create the exhibit in the

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[5] It is uncertain whether "administrative tasks" also consist of Forgács notes.
[6] It is uncertain what exactly the Getty Exhibitions Department is keeping in terms of a record or document.

future—in short, it appears that it may be a challenge due to the choices made in short term preservation strategies. Although, it is assumed that each contributor is documenting their role in the creation of the exhibit, there has been no agreement on what types of standards to follow or even a thorough understanding of what preservation of authenticity or reliability entails. Each contributor also has varying financial resources and interest in terms of archival preservation. Although the *Danube Exodus* is a collaborative art exhibit, from an archival perspective there appears to be no collaborative effort on how to preserve the work as a cohesive whole for future re-presentation.