InterPARES 2 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

Domain 1 Research Questions

Case Study 03:
HorizonZero/ZeroHorizon Online Magazine and Media Database

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1.1 What types of documents are traditionally made or received and set aside (that is, created) in the course of artistic, scientific, and government activities that are expected to be delivered on-line? For what purposes? What types of electronic documents are currently being created to accomplish those same activities? Have the purposes for which these documents are created changed?

- According to the case study questionnaire, "*HorizonZero* is an online publication with three web environments: a flash site, a text-based site, and a database-driven archive. An HTML portal serves as the entry point to all three environments."[1]

- The case study final report states that three main types of digital documents are created as these web environments are developed:
    - Administrative records: These "facilitate communication and control of the production process."
    - Journalistic/ artistic records: These include "documents that are drafted, revised, and ultimately incorporated into the published magazine."
    - Programming code: The code "creates the presentation and interactive features of the Flash Web site."[2]

- The published version of the online magazine combines text, image, sound and video in an interactive Flash Web site. A text-based site is also made available in keeping with W3C standards for accessibility. The activities of the *HorizonZero* team also result in an Internet-accessible database of media objects used to construct the published magazine.

- The first two categories of digital documents listed above would also have been created as part of a more traditional or analogue publication process, and for the same purposes.

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[1] See document titled "Notes from interview with Sandra Dametto…" posted to IP2 researcher's Web site.
[2] My description of these documents is taken verbatim from the answer to question 3 in the final report (no page numbers given.)

The third category of documents is obviously unique to digital and/or online publications. These documents allow for the look and feel of the web publication, and allow for an increased degree of user/ reader interaction which analogue publications may not be capable of achieving to the same degree. The case study focussed on documents of the second and third type.

- While the digital documents and publications discussed in the answer to this question have certainly been made, not all have been set aside, i.e. not all have been purposefully preserved for future use and/or reference.

1.2 What are the nature and the characteristics of the traditional process of document creation in each activity? Have they been altered by the use of digital technology and, if yes, how?

- The traditional process of document creation is not addressed in any of the case study documentation. However, the *HorizonZero* case study questionnaire notes that there are key differences between the working in a digital new media environment and a more traditional print environment.[3] These include:
  - Traditional environments usually have "established production mechanisms" in place, whereas new media producers "often lack the managerial background to implement these mechanisms." This difference is attributed to several factors:
    - The environment in which new media objects are produced is very different than that in which traditional media objects are created. This point is not explained in detail in the case study documentation.
    - New media productions frequently "lack the financial resources to implement and monitor effective managerial practices."
    - New media productions usually employ fewer people than traditional media productions so that single individuals often produce and manage the documents for which they are responsible, seemingly reducing the need for strict document management practices.
  - Print and film media tend to be fixed, while digital media has a more flexible nature. This fact contributes to an increased need for producers to "respect the locks" that are put in place to effectively manage production. In other words, procedures must be in place to determine when a digital media object is considered complete and should not be altered.

1.3 What are the formal elements and attributes of the documents generated by these processes in both a traditional and a digital environment? What is the function of each element and the significance of each attribute? Specifically, what is the manifestation of authorship in the records of each activity and its implications for the exercise of intellectual property rights and the attribution of responsibilities?

- The case study final report provides a list of file types and formats used to create the various types of administrative and journalistic/artistic digital documents that result from the production process. These include:
  - Text files in Word

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[3] See answer to question 2.3 in the "Notes from interview…" document.

- Layout files, which consist of layered images in .psd files
- Audio files in .aiff and .wav files
- Still images in .tiff, .psd, and .ai files
- Video images in .mov, .avi, .swf files
- Flash files for presentation/navigation/interactivity in .fla and .swf files

- The case study documentation provides no further information about individual digital documents. As such, the functions of each element and the significance of each attribute cannot be determined.[4]

- The case study does not specifically discuss issues of authorship; however, in the discussion about copyright, it is noted that individual contributors and artists retain copyright over their work, but waive moral rights, thereby permitting *HorizonZero* and the Banff Centre to reproduce the work in print or digital form in perpetuity.[5] In other words, while individual artists and writers are the authors of their work, many of the rights associated with authorship belong to *HorizonZero* and the Banff Centre; specifically, *HorizonZero* is allowed to use artists' work for any purpose without paying royalties.[6]

- Media assets (including assets designed and developed by individual contributors) that are saved to the ZeroHorizon database are tagged with *HorizonZero* metadata (in accordance with CanCore standards).

1.4 Does the definition of a record adopted by InterPARES 1 apply to all or part of the documents generated by these processes? If yes, given the different manifestations of the record's nature in such documents, how do we recognize and demonstrate the necessary components that the definition identifies? If not, is it possible to change the definition maintaining the theoretical consistency in the identification of documents as records across the spectrum of human activities? In other words, should we be looking at other factors that make of a document a record than those that diplomatics and archival science have considered so far?

- The diplomatic analysis for this case study does not appear to be completed.[7]

- The answer to Question 17 of the final report states that the *HorizonZero* team considers documents saved in the production folders for each issue of the magazine to be records. As well, the team considers the Production Bible – procedure manual that is updated as new procedures are developed – and postings to the tracker on the shared server to be records.

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[4] More detailed descriptions of the properties of the published versions of the magazine and of the published database can be found in the "Notes from interview…" document if these are determined to be necessary.

[5] Both the case study final report and the case study proposal state that copyright belongs to the artist and moral rights to *HorizonZero* and the Banff Centre; according to definitions of moral rights and copyright provided on the Canadian Intellectual Property Office Web site (http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc_mrksv/cipo/cp/copy_gd_gloss-e.html), these rights appear to have been reversed. It may be worthwhile double checking to whom copyright and moral rights belong.

[6] See answer to Q. 21 in final report.

[7] It is my understanding that the diplomatic analysis posted to the IP2 Web site is currently under review. When a final version of it has been posted, it may prove useful to return to this question. For now, I have provided a brief summary of how other digital components (besides the final publication and database) might be analysed diplomatically.

- The incomplete diplomatic analysis concludes that the issues and database on the live site are all publications as they are the end result of the activities of artistic production and of the issuing of the magazine. On the basis that these documents are not by-products of an action, and because they do not acquire an archival bond, the diplomatic analysis does not address any of the other characteristics of a record.

- The diplomatic analysis is correct in stating that the published issues and database are not records; however, the documents considered by the *HorizonZero* team to be records do meet most of the requirements of a record as defined by InterPARES 1. For example:
    - The case study report indicates that "files destined for preservation are posted to the [shared] server and then burned to CD-ROM on an issue-by-issue basis."[8] Thus, these files can be said to have been set aside in a fixed form and with stable content.
    - The digital entities that are the object of the case study (i.e., the records identified in question 17 of the final report and listed above) result from the activities of conceiving and producing the online publication. Thus, they can be said to participate in an action.
    - Some of the digital entities are saved in production folders based on the issue for which they are developed. Some *HorizonZero* staff use file naming conventions to identify files according to the issue to which they belong and to their status as drafts, revised and final versions. Other files are titled on an ad hoc basis, and saved either to personal hard drives or to ad hoc folders in the shared directory. Though the archival bond has not been made explicit in each case, there is an implicit archival bond between documents generated as part of the same issue.
    - A complete diplomatic analysis of these other types of digital entities should examine the contexts in which the entities are created and the persons involved in their creation. However, even without this information, the digital elements created during the process of production (i.e., trackings, draft and revised documents, etc) appear to meet the requirements of a record as defined by IP1.

1.5 As government and businesses deliver services electronically and enter into transactions based on more dynamic web-based presentations and exchanges of information, are they neglecting to capture adequate documentary evidence of the occurrence of these transactions?

- This question does not fully apply to this case study because for most of the activities undertaken by the team there is no legal mandate to make or keep documentary evidence. The only transaction for which *HorizonZero* must be certain of capturing adequate documentary evidence is the issuing of contracts and licensing agreements related to the copyright of artist and writer submissions, and there is no neglect in this area.

1.6 Is the move to more dynamic and open-ended exchanges of information blurring the responsibilities and altering the legal liabilities of the participants in electronic transactions?

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[8] See discussion of Technological Context in case study final report.

- As mentioned above, there are no specific laws or regulations governing the activities of the *HorizonZero* except for those related to copyright. *HorizonZero* negotiates a copyright license with each of its contributors whereby the contributor retains copyright over the work but waives moral rights, so that the Banff Centre has rights in perpetuity for the reproduction of the work in digital or print format.

- The case study final report does not provide any information indicating that copyright issues have been affected or altered through the use of digital technologies.

- It might be important to note here that the case study final report states that contracts and other legal documents are kept in paper form.

1.7 How do record creators traditionally determine the retention of their records and implement this determination in the context of each activity? How do record retention decisions and practices differ for individual and institutional creators? How has the use of digital technology affected their decisions and practices?

- The case study report (and other case study documentation) makes no mention of how retention is traditionally determined. Since there is no legal mandate to produce records, it may be assumed that retention periods are determined based on the needs of the creator for continued access to his own records for use and/or reference if they are determined at all. Though it is not discussed in the case study documentation, it might be presumed that the use of digital technology could increase creators' understanding of the need to make retention decisions and implement procedures; where paper records might last indefinitely despite a lack of retention and/or preservation policies, awareness of the tendency for digital documents to become inaccessible due to technological obsolescence might impress upon creators the need to be proactive by considering the retention needs of their records.

- The question of retention has not been adequately addressed by the *HorizonZero* team. A decision was made to end the project at the end of 2004. All files related to the project were transferred to a single personal computer capable of running all of the software and hardware needed to access all types of files used in the project. The Web site is to be maintained on a contractual basis for ten years, with the understanding that the type of interaction provided through the use of chat rooms and message boards will be disabled. The final report does not specify how these decisions were made, or whether there are any other plans in place to ensure long-term preservation.