



InterPARES 2 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

Domain 1 Research Questions

Case Study 05: Archives of Ontario Web Exhibits

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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 governmental activities that are expected to be carried out 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?

- Traditional documents created in the course of exhibit activities include physical materials such as photographs, correspondence, historical documentation, drawings, and paintings
- Exhibits are traditionally created for promotional purposes and to highlight archival holdings. They are often aimed at eliciting aesthetic, emotive, evocative, didactic, or entertaining feelings in the beholder
- There are three categories of digital entities:
 - Digital components
 - digitized images (in jpeg format), text (in HTML, Microsoft Word, pdf, or ASCII format), sound files (in wav or aif format), and video files (in Windows Media Player or Quicktime format)
 - HTML – coded web pages
 - marked up narrative text, callouts to thumbnail and larger images, sound or moving image files in multiple formats, style sheets that specify font size and type
 - Exhibits
- The purposes of traditional exhibit creation have not changed in the digital context, but are rather facilitated in that their creation can be carried out at less expense, at greater flexibility, and with fewer restrictions on access and interacting. The following additional purposes exist in the digital environment:
 - To demonstrate the relevance of archives in "the information age"

- To provide links to other products, especially to those that are online
- To provide remote and continual access, thus making possible distance archives and distance education
- To increase access to holdings through links within the exhibit

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 processes of document creation include the following:
 - The research process
 - Deciding on the subject and focus of the exhibit
 - Reviewing secondary sources in order to aid in choosing which records in the archival holdings to include in the exhibit
 - Finalizing the textual information and narrowing down chosen records
 - The administrative process
 - Obtaining the initial and final approvals of the exhibit topic and its final draft
 - Obtaining approvals of the narrative focus, image and text selection, allocation of resources, and of the overall design and navigation of the exhibit's technological sections
 - The technological process
 - Creating the web exhibit
 - Creating the components to be used in the exhibit, including:
 - creating images in tiff format from which jpegs are produced
 - utilizing documents developed in the research process to incorporate into the exhibit structure
- While the use of digital technology has not fundamentally altered traditional processes of document creation, it has added processes that were previously not applicable

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 exhibit digital entity formal elements and attributes consist of the following:
 - Navigation links to a listing
 - Required navigation links and bars
 - Exhibit content (web pages that contain text, images, sound or video files)
 - Government visual identity signs (provincial and city logos, institutional name, disclaimers, copyright statements, graphics, etc.)
 - A corporate standard web page template
 - A cascading style sheet
 - The corporate web environment that links to government websites and publications

- Hyper-Text Markup Language (specification version 4.01)
- A feedback form (Common Gateway Interface script)
- Authorship is evident in a number of ways:
 - URL's which indicate the corporate domain
 - Visual cues such as government and institutional logos and navigational links and bars that are required by the web page template used
 - Copyright is claimed by the jurisdiction as a textual component of the web page template

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 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 determined that the Archives of Ontario web exhibits that are created and set aside on the development server are records according to the definition established by InterPARES 1
 - Those exhibits residing on the production server were determined to be autonomous publications and therefore not records
- Exhibits on both servers possess fixed content and form
- The exhibits residing on the development server are generated as by-products or means for the activity of outreach and their existence is essential for further action to be taken
 - Exhibits on the production server consist of autonomous, complete documents that are intended for public access and are not activity by-products
- The development server exhibits possess an archival bond with other records generated in the course of the same activity
 - Exhibits on the production server possess relationships with other entities but not an archival bond because they do not result from the same activity
- Three persons (author, writer, addressee) are clearly involved in the creation of the exhibits:
 - On the development server, the Archives of Ontario (author, addressee, creator), Archives' curators or managers (writer)
 - On the production server, the Archives of Ontario (author, writer), public at large (addressee), Government of Ontario (originator). A creator does not exist because the production server exhibits are not attached through an archival bond to a record in any fonds
- The exhibits possess an identifiable context:

- Juridical/administrative: creation is governed by the *Archives' Act*, the *Management of Recorded Information Directive*, and the Archives of Ontario's mandate for both server exhibits
 - Provenancial: the Archives of Ontario comprises the creating body of this case study for both server exhibits
 - Procedural: specific phases carried out in the creation and development of the exhibits for both servers
 - Documentary: is part of the Archives of Ontario fonds for the development server exhibits
 - Technological: exhibits contain HTML coding and conform to government style sheet regulations in both exhibits
- The Archives of Ontario web exhibits that are hosted on the production server are not considered to be records according to the diplomatic analysis; rather, they are classified as autonomous publications. Arguments against this definition include:¹
 - The loss of relationships with records that exist only within the website
 - The movement of the exhibits from the development server to the production server as an act of setting them aside
 - The development server content is not considered to be the reliable and authentic content of the production server exhibits

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?

- All aspects of transactions (when defined as interactions with the Archives' website) are captured by web logging software. The data is then amassed into twenty-one various reports that are provided to the exhibit creators.

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?

- The legal liabilities of participants in electronic transactions are strictly adhered to. In fact, special legislation that defines requirements in the areas of corporate identity, copyright, and authorization has been implemented and consists of the following:
 - Mandatory requirements for ministries and agencies
 - Guidelines outlining directions that should be followed
 - Preferred practices that aid ministries and agencies position themselves for the future

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?

¹ E-mail message from Jim Suderman to Natalie Catto, dated 6 June 2005.

- No retention has been determined for the web exhibits, nor does any recordkeeping system govern their life cycle
- Records practices differ between individual and institutional creators in that exhibits supporting records are stored in relation to individuals' roles in creation, while the web exhibits themselves are kept active within the institutional web environment
- Retention practices are influenced by the implementation of digital technology in the creation of exhibits
 - No policies or procedures have been developed for web exhibit preservation
 - No lifecycle, in either practice or legal requirements, has been determined for web exhibits as has been determined for exhibits in the traditional context