



# InterPARES 2 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

## Overview

### Case Study 09(1): Digital Moving Images – Altair4 di Roma. A Multimedia Archaeological Project: *The House of Julius Polybius*

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#### **The Creator Context / Activity**

Creator: Altair4 Multimedia

Creator type: Artistic focus, private sphere (small corporation)

Juridical context: Relevant laws include:

- Copyright legislation
- Legal rights related to contracts
- Relevant Italian and European Union law

Activity: Create multimedia productions using industrial design methodologies. Specific activities include:

- Research and development
- Creating broadcast productions
- Creating Web sites and information aids for museums and institutions
- Creating 3-D archaeological reconstructions

#### **Nature of Partnership**

The creator enters into agreements with contracting parties for each project.

#### **Bureaucratic/Organizational Structure**

The three founding members (Pietro Galifi, Stefano Moretti, and Alessandro Furlan) work as directors and coordinators of the company. In addition to the three founding members, Altair4 also employs a secretary and skilled staff: 3D artists, 2D artists, software programmers, an editor and producer. The company has one location in Rome, Italy.

Funding is received through contracts with national organizations and private companies.

## Digital Entities Studied

The digital entity that is the focus of this case study is a multimedia virtual reconstruction (in digital video) of an archaeological site at Pompeii, Italy known as the House of Julius Polybius. (The actual house was destroyed in 79 AD by the eruption of Vesuvius. Altair4 was commissioned to undertake this project by the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology of Tokyo University, which used the product for a touring educational exhibition.

## Documentary Practices Observed

The system (unspecified in the final report) manages all the digital entities created in the identified activity.

### Record Creation and Maintenance

“There are some **policies** that control the workflow of record creation and quality,” (FR 7, 11) and there appears to be a workflow for the production in question, although it is stated in the final report that “there are no formal or written procedures.” (FR 5) Perhaps this is meant to be understood that while there is a workflow for individual productions, there are no formalized procedures uniformly applied to every production. “The workflow needed to produce the film determines all the processes. The entities are passed from one group to the next for manipulation and treatment.” (FR 4) As part of the creation process, images were initially created on paper and were then transferred to digital form, although the creator views the project as digital, not mixed.

The means of **organizing** digital entities include **naming conventions**, **version control** and a prescribed directory structure. “A file-naming convention is used to identify the digital entities and is followed by all those involved in manipulating a file. Folder names include the project name/file object name/number of version and the last version file object name/final version...Files are organized in directories and sub-directories. Files are **aggregated** by project, which is reflected in the naming convention.” (FR 4)

### Recordkeeping and Preservation

Recordkeeping is **informal**. “A secretary files the paperwork but possesses no specific archival skills.” (FR 6) There is no recordkeeping system. Altair4 uses the ‘Where is it’ program “to reorganize and retrieve digital entities. In order to use them, it is necessary to know the filename, path and approximate date of production.” (FR 6) It is not specified in the final report what becomes of the analogical entities or how the creator views them in relation to the digital entities.

As a result of this informal record-keeping environment, no **preservation strategies** or specific means of preservation are used. “Once the file has moved on, there are no preservation policies, procedures or standards except for preparation of global **backups**.” (FR 7) This lack of preservation is somewhat ironic, given the fact that the purpose of the project under study (and much of Altair4’s work) is to preserve the original archaeological heritage by using virtual technology.

Daily backups of work are made to CD-ROM or DVD-ROM and at the end of a project, Altair4 saves 90% of the digital entities created as by-products or products of the creation process (to make the final version) with a final global backup. “Selection is made on the basis of importance and similarity, e.g., where two versions are practically identical, only one is saved.” (FR 6, 10)

With regards to the question of **obsolescence** or technological change, “Altair4 has not considered the long-term preservation of digital entities. Finished products are duplicated on media, i.e., CD, DVD, and have a large circulation.” (FR 7)

### **Accuracy, Authenticity and Reliability**

#### Accuracy

This issue is not addressed in the final report, apart from the notion of “quality” in the Reliability section, below.

#### Authenticity

The creator believes that “the version number confers authenticity on the digital entities.” (FR 5) Moreover, the creator “believes the authenticity of the entities is assured once they are saved in the project folder.” (FR 5)

#### Reliability

As with other case studies involving creators of moving images, the creator equates reliability with usability. In addition, the creator feels that backing up its work ensures this reliability. “The quality and reliability of the digital entities are ensured if the digital entity can be used to carry out the next stage of work. At the system level, reliability is conferred by daily backups, which protect against corrupt files.” (FR 5)