



InterPARES 2 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

Characterization of Case Study Validated

Case Study 09-3: Digital Moving Images: Commercial Film Studio

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Relevance of the Case Study to InterPARES 2

The purpose of this case study is to examine the workflow required to create a computer graphic animated feature film. This study focuses on the digital and physical entities, called assets, created during the initial stages of conception through to the final film product. The relevance of this case study is to enable InterPARES to reach its goals with respect to the study of artistic activities that are conducted using experiential, interactive and dynamic computer technology.

Information about the Creator

The Creator is a large commercial film studio that is well known and has won a variety of awards, including an Academy Award. The studio agreed to participate as a partner in this case study on the condition that it would remain anonymous. As such, the mandate and mission of the studio as well as its structure of governance may not be described. Nevertheless, the primary function of the studio is to create computer graphic animated films to be released on DVD format or in theatres.

Information about the Administrative/Management Function

During the film creation process, a variety of activities are involved in the animation production such as pre-visualization, story development and the creation of final moving images. These activities result in documents such as memos, spreadsheets, drawings and computer files encompassing both text and graphics.

The studio does not have a record-keeping system, but there is a studio archives that maintains a data asset management system. This system acts as a kind of repository as well as digital asset management system. Nonetheless, there is no automatic transfer of records to the

archives. The archivist must seek out the material to be archived, gather the material and ingest it into the system.

The technological context in which the animated films are created consists of Hewlett Packard computers linked in a large network server. Access to digital entities in the data asset management system varies according to the competencies of each individual user. Specific permissions are granted to each user and access security is set up at the directory or folder level.

Information about the Digital Entity Being studied

The digital entities being studied are the works of art (assets) that are created and modified throughout the film creation process and which eventually become the final film product. These entities are generally graphics in the form of TIFF, .mov and JPEG files. Naming conventions are used to identify the digital entities at the production level. Each individual production develops its own naming conventions which are strictly adhered to. There is no system for digitally archiving materials although selected digital entities are stored on backup tapes. Regardless, long-term preservation of records is not a concern for the studio. Digital entities evolve over time throughout the production process and modified files are simply overwritten. Earlier versions of artwork are generally discarded and if previous artwork needs to be re-used, it is re-created. This avoids the need to develop migration strategies or to address issues surrounding hardware and software obsolescence.