



InterPARES 2 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

Domain 1 Research Questions

Case Study 10: *The Danube Exodus*

Jennifer Douglas, UBC

June 2006

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?

- There is no discussion in the case study interim report about what types of documents are traditionally created.
- The digital entities created during the installation of *The Danube Exodus* include:
 - Video footage
 - An interactive database
 - A musical score (this may or may not have been digital—the case study interim report does not specify)
 - Various administrative and planning documents
- The digital entities are created for a number of general purposes:
 - To be displayed as part of the multimedia installation
 - To facilitate interaction with the multimedia installation
 - As part of administrative and/or planning processes

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?

- Each of the groups involved in the creation of the installation develops its own customary creative process. These processes are described as flexible, and capable of adapting to circumstances as they arise. The processes are also described as “iterative” and “collaborative.”¹

¹ Case Study 10 Final Report, p. 6.

- The processes of creation specific to this installation are not discussed in detail in the case study documentation. Neither is the difference between creative processes in digital and non-digital environments addressed.

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 does not describe the formal elements and attributes of the documents generated during the process of creating and mounting the exhibit, except to describe the hardware and software used by each of the contributors.
 - Administrative documents are created using Microsoft office applications (Word, Excel, etc.)
 - The Labyrinth Project uses Macromedia Director to create its interactive DVDs, Macromedia Flash to create interactive Web pieces, Adobe Photoshop for image editing, DVD Studio Pro for DVD authoring and Final Cut Pro for video editing
 - The database is created using PHP scripting, as well as Real Player audio and video files and JPEG and GIF images
- It is difficult to ascertain exactly how authorship is manifested in the documents, but it is clear from the interim case study report that authorship is an issue in this project, since different components of the installation are created by different groups and individuals. (See answer to question 1.6)

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 answer to question 17 in the case study final report states: "None of the subjects were familiar with archival terminology, but all seemed to make the distinction between works, files used in the actual installation, and supporting documents, or documents created as a by-product of work production, and to be willing to see the latter as records."² The wording of this answer suggests that the creators were not in the habit of considering any of their documents as records, but that after discussing the documents with an InterPARES researcher, were able to see how the end products, or works, would not be considered records, while the by-products of the action of creating the installation should be.

² Ibid., p. 9.

- The diplomatic analysis of this case study concludes that the exhibit itself and the interactive database are end products of the activity of creating the installation, and therefore cannot be considered as records.
- The diplomatic analysis does not deal with the “supporting documents” described above as records, and this is likely because there is little information in the case study interim report about these types of documents. However, these would presumably meet the primary requirements of a record as defined by InterPARES 1 in that:
 - They likely possess fixed form and stable content; the case study interim report indicates that each of the creators saves and backs up their work, and also reveals that “active authoring and editing” of the work was completed when the first installation opened.³ As such, it may be assumed that supporting documents exist somewhere with fixed form and stable content.
 - They result as by-products of the activity (and constituent activities) of creating the installation.
 - They likely possess at least an implicit archival bond; the case study interim report implies that work is saved to project files and named according to ad-hoc, but identifiable, conventions, and in accordance with the intellectual organization of the project; thus, it should be possible to determine how individual work files and folders relate to others.
 - The contexts and the persons as outlined in the diplomatic analysis would likely apply to supporting documents as well as to the actual installation and database files.
- Without further information, it is difficult to determine how the concept of record as it is currently defined would need to be altered, although it is clear that in the case of *The Danube Exodus* there is, as with other Focus 1 case studies, a focus on the final outputs of the activity rather than on the so-called supporting documents.

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 is not relevant to this case study, though there is a question about whether adequate documentation is being kept (in an organized and systematic manner) to allow for the recreation of the installation as a whole.

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 only legal issues explored in any detail in the case study documentation are concerns related to copyright, copyleft and intellectual property. These issues are aggravated as a result of the complicated authorship and ownership of the work and of its component parts, including those to which institutions other than the primary authors hold copyright.

³ Ibid., p. 8.

The ambiguities of this situation leave *The Danube Exodus* “vulnerable”;⁴ however, there is nothing in the case study documentation that specifically addresses how this situation would differ from a similar situation in a non-digital environment.

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?

- Though there is no specific discussion about retention decisions and practices, the case study interim report mentions that priority was given to preserving certain documents and digital entities over others. In the first place, it is the works themselves—or parts of those works—which are preserved, along with the work files needed to render them. Next in importance are documents which describe or illustrate how the installation should “look, work, behave.” Least important in terms of long-term preservation are administrative records including meeting minutes and correspondence.⁵
- The case study interim report also notes that decisions about the relevancy or importance of a file is left to the discretion of the individual responsible for the corresponding portion of the project.
- As such, it is clear that there is some discussion about, and some sphere of responsibility for, the retention of different types of documents.
- However, there is no discussion about changes effected by the use of digital technology.

⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

⁵ Ibid., p. 6.