



InterPARES 2 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

Domain 3 Research Questions

Case Study 12: Antarctic Treaty Searchable Database

Adam Farrell, UBC

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1. **What types of entities does the diplomatic analysis identify in this case study? (i.e., records, publications, data, etc.)**

The diplomatic analysis identifies the object of study is a publication. It is not a by-product of an action. This case study identifies documents in both electronic and paper formats.

- 1a. **If there are no records, should there be records? If not, why not?**

No. The original treaties are records. In this form, their purpose is to facilitate dissemination to a wide public. The diplomatic analysis reveals that the Antarctic Treaty Searchable Database does not meet all of the requirements of a record, and as such, cannot be considered one. Although the database provides innovative means of access to a variety of interesting and important documents and records, it must be recognized that the representation of those documents and records in the database do not have effects and contexts equivalent to the originals; in fact, the database consists of a collection of simple copies (i.e., transcriptions of the contents) of various treaty and policy documents, purposefully selected and gathered for dissemination. Conceived of as a tool for education and public information, and developed to stand alone as an information resource, the database must be treated as a publication.

- 1b. **If there should be records, what kinds of records should be created to satisfy the creator's needs (as defined by an archivist)?**

Not applicable.

1c. What characteristics of records (as defined by an archivist) are missing yet necessary to preserve these entities?

Through the Diplomatic analysis the publication is seen as the whole system. The whole system must be preserved. It has:

- a fixed documentary form
- a stable content

As a publication, the database meets the first two characteristics of a record listed below:

1. It has an author (Paul Berkman—The work was undertaken completely on his own initiative; no legal or government mandate exists for the database.).
2. It has a writer (Paul on behalf on who commissioned it—ATCM—the official body uses it as a reference tool).
3. The addressee is the public at large.
4. It does not have an archival bond with other records either inside or outside the system. There is no archival bond. There is a bibliographic relationship between the transcription of each treaty located inside the database, and the records (the treaties) themselves. It is like a citation based on the same title.
5. Regarding an identifiable context, it does not depend on a context for meaning. It stands alone. The introduction to the publication itself provides context.
6. To be a record, the database has to participate in an action: from the moment the publication is used in an action, it will become a record of that subsequent action.

Failure of any of the above six characteristics automatically disqualifies the database from being a record. One that cannot be resolved is “participate in an action.”

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2. Are the entities reliable? If not, why not?

Yes, the entities are reliable. To ensure reliability, content and context of the Antarctic Treaty Searchable Database is preserved and unmodified from its original sources, which are described in Figure 5 in the Final Report. Reliability of the Antarctic Treaty Searchable Database and its practical value are best reflected by the diverse stakeholders around the world who have created Web site linkages to this digital collection of integrated policy documents (see Box 5 in the Final Report).

3. Are the entities accurate? If not, why not?

At this time, the accurateness cannot be verified. To answer this question we need a description of the transcription process to judge the accuracy and/or the statistics of their own verification process.

4. To what degree can the entities be presumed to be authentic, and why?

The entities are presumed to be authentic by the creator as a result of Web server security (which is maintained by an external body) and corporate Web page templates. Also, the exhibits must be authentic for accountability purposes. Because the components of every Web page are linked to the government, they must not damage the image of the government; and because the exhibits are accessed by the public, they must not misrepresent the creator or its holdings.

Benchmark Requirements Supporting the Production of Authentic Copies of Electronic Records (these apply to the creator):

1. Capture of identity and integrity metadata

It should be noted that metadata associated with copies of the original records are dissociated from those copies as they are ingested into the database, a practice which contributes to a loss of context in the archival sense, and a further erosion of the link between database representations and original documents.

Identity would be different metadata for a publication than a record - based on bibliographic record on the CD. In bibliographic terms, Paul would be the compiler (the writer) and the author. The work was undertaken completely on his own initiative; no legal or government mandate exists for the database.

Integrity would not have to do with a trusted custodian or who handled the information. It would have to do with the description of the actual technological characteristics of the system, and that these elements have not been changed, and that the content cannot be tampered with (read-only)

2. Enforcement of access privileges

Read-only nature of the CD and access to the original database (master copy) is controlled.

3. **Protection against loss and corruption**
Cannot be erased or modified.
4. **Protection against media and technology obsolescence**
No specific mention of protection against loss and corruption is mentioned in the Final Report. However, the database utilizes a widely used technology and is based on a standard, consequently reducing the possibility of obsolescence. The database does not use any proprietary software, and is therefore considered by the creator to be easily preserved in its current form over time.
5. **Established documentary forms**
The documentary form is inherent in the construction of the database. New content is added to the Antarctic Treaty Searchable Database as necessary, but the creator insists that when new content is added, “it is still possible to generate consistent and reproducible hierarchies across a prescribed set of years for any query” on the database. Each new version of the database is saved and given a new edition number. Although the database is regularly updated, the versions that are set aside can be said to have fixed content and form.
6. **Ability to authenticate records**
There is no established procedure for authentication because Berkman is the primary individual involved. Authentication would be done by comparison, rather than procedures
7. **Procedures in place to identify the authoritative record**
The security on the original database is the only presumed procedure in place to identify the authoritative record.
8. **Procedures in place to properly document removal and transfer of records from the creator’s originating system**
There is no specific mention of any procedures in place for the removal or transfer of information in the database.

5. For what purpose(s) are the entities to be preserved?

The preservation of the entities are necessary to ensure the ongoing access to the database as a reference tool and as a means for providing improved public access to documents relating to Antarctic treaties and policies.

6. Has the feasibility of preservation been explored?

No. However, the database does not use any proprietary software, and is therefore considered by the creator to be easily preserved in its current form over time. The database must be treated as a publication, and preservation strategies developed accordingly.

6a. If yes, what elements and components need to be preserved?

Not applicable

7. Which preservation strategies might most usefully be applied, and what are their strengths and weaknesses, including costs and degree of technical difficulty?

See question 6. There is insufficient information to fully evaluate this question in detail.

7a. Which alternative preservation strategies might be applied? What are their strengths and weaknesses, including costs and degree of technical difficulty?

Not applicable

8. What additional information does the preserver need to know to facilitate appraisal and preservation?

The database must be treated as a publication, and preservation strategies developed accordingly. As such, a publication is not subject to archival appraisal. Selection should be done based on the content of the product itself. No formal responsibility for preservation has been accepted or acknowledged in the Final Report.

8a. If required information is missing, where should it come from and how should it be made manifest?

[No answer provided.]

9. Are there any policies in place that affect preservation?

Yes

9a. Are there any policies in place that present obstacles to preservation?

Yes. If there is a search algorithm, it would be subject to copyright and intellectual property rights in the compilation of the treaties (granules).

9b. Are there any policies that would need to be put in place to facilitate appraisal and preservation?

Policies might be put in place to facilitate the identification of the person (physical or juridical) institution primarily responsible for preservation.

Identification of this product as an electronic publication in law, making it subject to legal deposit.