



InterPARES 2 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

Case Study Proposal

The New York State Department of Motor Vehicles: Electronic Records in an Online and Networked Environment Focus 3 - Government

Mark Wolfe

University at Albany, State University of New York

June 2003

Description

As a result of the New York State's 'Government Without Walls' e-commerce initiative started on June 12, 2000, the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles¹ (NYS DMV) now offers many online services to citizens and corporations. According to New York State's Office for Technology, "This initiative is designed to provide on-line access to critical State services and resources in a user-friendly and easily-accessible environment."² The DMV conducts many online services with customers via a web browser such as registration renewal, driver's license ordering and renewal, custom plate ordering, and driver's tests scheduling. Users conduct legal and financial transactions within the website, which generates records in a networked and online environment. The DMV's highly interactive online system features a complex set of interwoven electronic activities. It collects information about the user via cookies, web protocols, and transactional metadata. A third party digital signature company VeriSign is used to make transactions legally binding.

Rationale

This case study is of special interest to InterPARES 2 because the NYS DMV's online services feature dynamic and interactive legal transactions within its website. The NYS DMV exemplifies a general transition worldwide in government services from offline databases and document management systems towards fully interactive and dynamic online "e-government." We will consider the general InterPARES 2 research questions across all three domains.

¹ <<http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/transact.htm>>

² <<http://www.oft.state.ny.us/ecommerce/govtwithoutwalls.htm>>

Domain 1

We aim to address questions and concerns surrounding records creation and maintenance in the DMV's online system, such as:

- How are the DMV digital entities generated? What are the processes from which they emerge?
- How are digital entities linked to other DMV digital and non-digital entities during the creation process?
- How are DMV digital entities used, and how are they updated? Do external users have access?
- Among the DMV's digital entities, which ones does it consider to be records, and how does it define those records?

Domain 2

The DMV's mission is largely dictated by legal mandates, which rely on records created in authentic, accurate, and reliable recordkeeping systems. In an online environment certain specific questions arise:

- What measures does the DMV take to ensure authenticity of digital entities from a technical and legal perspective?
- How is authenticity affected by third part participants such as VeriSign?
- How does the DMV define authenticity?*
- How does shared access affect authenticity, reliable, and accuracy?*
- To what degree does IP1's definition of authenticity accommodate records created in an online environment?*

Domain 3

When considering DMV records of long-term value, many technological concerns impinge on the ability to preserve them. These concerns will be addressed in the following questions:

- How does the DMV ensure that authenticity is preserved through technological change?
- What descriptive metadata are currently being used in the DMV online system, and how has it been implemented?

Methodology

InterPARES researchers will conduct in-depth interviews with key DMV personnel involved in IT, records management, and legal operations of the online system. Individual questionnaires will be written according to who is being interviewed while staying within the framework of the IP 2 general research questions. For example, the questionnaire for the legal personnel will use legal or juridical terms and concepts specific to her area of knowledge. We will conduct content analysis on the transcriptions once interviews are transcribed. The interviews will be coded in a qualitative data analysis software application. We will identify key concepts in the interviews such as "preservation, admissibility, authenticity, and accuracy," and explore how the interviewees' concepts might be linked to IP1 concepts. We will also model business processes and functions of the DMV, and explore how they might fit into the IP1 appraisal and preservation IDEF0 models. These models will illustrate procedures such as data backup, storage, and retrieval. We will write a technical description of the system along with a complete narrative report of the case study.

Research Team

Co-investigators: Phil Eppard and Terry Maxwell
Project Manager: Mark Wolfe
Graduate Assistant: Reg White

Timeline

InterPARES approval	June 2003
Human Subjects approval	July 2003
Preliminary visit with DMV personnel	August 2003
Design questionnaire(s)	August 2003
Conduct interviews	September 2003
Transcribe interviews	September-October 2003
Begin analysis and modeling	October-November 2003
Write narrative report of findings	December-January 2003-4
Review report with Focus 3 members	February 2004