



# **InterPARES 2 Project**

**International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems**

## **Characterization of Case Study Unvalidated**

### **Case Study 22: Electronic Café International (ECI)**

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#### **Relevance of the Case Study to InterPARES 2**

The purpose of this case study is to examine the digital entities comprising Electronic Café's early work and telecollaborative art projects. This include projects such as "Hole in Space," Satellite Arts and Electronic Café as well as the Electronic Café International (ECI) itself and ECI's documentation of its projects and events. The relevance of the case study is therefore to enable InterPARES to meet its goals in relation to the study of artistic activities that are conducted using experiential, interactive and dynamic computer technology.

#### **Information about the Creator**

The creator is Electronic Café International which was established in 1988 and is based in Santa Monica, California. The purpose of ECI is to showcase creative, multi- cultural, multi-disciplinary, collaborative telecommunications. The final report for this case study does not describe the governance of ECI, nor its funding structure, however, a variety of institutions such as the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art and the Getty have donated funds to ECI. The mission of the creator is build cross-cultural, telecollaborative and informal communities that share resources. ECI attempts to explore cultural diversity and art in a hybrid-networked environment. ECI's major functions include: fostering collaboration, communication and community; bringing people together over distances in a global environment; placing technology and a multi-media network in public spaces for people to encounter; creating a virtual space with no limits.

#### **Information about the Administration / Management Function**

ECI stores its entities in a variety of formats, from textual to obsolete multi-media formats. The documents that result from ECI's projects include those related to the planning stages of a work such as drawings and written proposals, records related to the executing of a work, records created in the course of performing a work, records that capture major portions of a work such as composite or single channel video feeds and finally records that attempt to document a work such as interviews or news coverage.

No formal recordkeeping procedures exist at ECI although the group has started to assess its collection in order to create a plan to stabilize and catalogue its collection, and to digitize it. The technological environment in which ECI operates is not explained in the final report, but it is clear that ECI uses computers, video and robot equipment in the development of some of its projects. ECI also has servers, sub-system components, peripheral computer devices, video production, processing and display devices and teleconferencing devices. ECI owns the rights to the telecollaborative work it produces, but certain performances cannot be recreated until third parties have released their rights.

### **Information about the Digital Entity Being Studied**

The digital entities under investigation include Electronic Café's early work and telecollaborative art projects. This include projects such as "Hole in Space," Satellite Arts and Electronic Café as well as the Electronic Café International (ECI) itself and ECI's documentation of its projects and events. Records that result from the projects listed above include sketches and correspondence, digital art and collaborative writing, videos and photos.

Although ECI has no preservation strategy as such, the group has started to digitize three dimensional objects using Quick Time VR and plans to migrate analogue and other records to digital form. ECI hopes to create a 'living archive' meaning its records will be accessible via the Internet and people will be able to add their contributions online in response to an event or work. Additionally, because it has so much material, ECI is considering the possibility of allowing people to 'take things out' (see Case Study 22 Draft Final Report, p. 8). ECI is not concerned about the physical medium or software necessary to recreate a work because it does not believe these elements are intrinsic to the art. Rather, ECI wants to ensure the look of a work is maintained over time in terms of aspect ratio, colour, hue, size and sometimes font. ECI also wants to preserve the informational content in order to capture the human story that is connected to a work.

Initially ECI works were created using global connectivity technology (satellites and dial up phone networks). Later a variety of cheap narrow band technology and broadband technology was used for web casts. Currently, public ECI events are video and audio cybercast using JAVA-based technology requiring plug-ins to view. ECI stores a variety of media and formats including text, video and audio recordings, DC300 XL and DC 6150 data cartridges, Kodak Photo CD, CD Rom and DVD, Yamaha Disklavier piano floppy disks, mini-floppy (photographic) and various other floppy disks. Due to the amount and variety of material stored by ECI, its collection is faced with the problem of obsolescence.