



# InterPARES 2 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

## Domain 1 Research Questions

### Case Study 25: Legacoop of Bologna Web Site

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**1.1** What types of documents are traditionally made or received and set aside (that is, created), in the course of artistic, scientific, and governmental 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?

- Legacoop Bologna creates circulars, regulation documents, final reports, newsletters, e-mails, paper correspondence, and contracts containing information related to the services and activities of Legacoop Bologna.
- These documents are created as a means to share information about Legacoop Bologna's projects and provide services to cooperative members.
- The Legacoop Bologna Web site includes newsletters, job advertisements, documents related to the administration of the cooperative, and an online job application database.
- The Legacoop Bologna Web site was created in 2002 to increase and maintain the network of the cooperative members. The documents on the Web site are created for the same purposes as traditional documents: to provide information about Legacoop Bologna.
  - The Web site provides information in the following categories: Who we Are, News, Projects, The Network, and Newsletter. The Web site provides four services: subscription to the newsletter, publishing of consultancy services and explanatory documents, announcement of job advertisements, and an online job application service.
  - In addition, the Web site acts as a vital tool for the maintenance of Legacoop's network of members. This is accomplished primarily through the posting of documents in the restricted area of the Web site.

**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?

- Activities resulting in the creation of documents include the submission of reports and job postings, the creation of promotional publications, the updating of circulars, meetings of the cooperative, and the publication of the newsletter.
  - The case study fails to explicitly identify the traditional process of document creation.
- There are no specific criteria or controls over the creation of digital documents.
  - Digital documents posted to the Web site are converted to web pages prior to being uploaded; an increasing number of documents are born digital.
- Digital documents are primarily created through the following activities: the publication of the cooperative's newsletter, and the publication of documents in the restricted site.

**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 are 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 Web site's system resides on a web server, compatible with both Unix and Windows; the newsletter is created using BIGFILE; the Web site also features a SQL database of CVs, e-mails and text files converted to .html, JavaScript files, and image files.
- All entities on the Web site have at minimum a title and body text; each document is also numbered sequentially according to the date on which they were posted.
- The Web site is technically managed by an external web agency, responsible for ensuring infra-structural services, posting data and developing and maintaining the technical and graphic aspects of the site.
- The content of the Legacoop Bologna Web site, however, is produced in-house. Legacoop Bologna manages the Web site internally through an editorial system, which allows for the updating of pages; this system is available to the many offices that participate in the management of Web site documents.
  - Offices involved include: the communication office, responsible for overall management and updating of the homepage, the public news area, and parts of the restricted area; the IT office, responsible for the restricted area and some content posting; the industrial relations office, responsible for the job section and the CV database; and the general secretary, responsible for updating the agenda content on the intranet.

**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 records' 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 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 creator considers the Web site to be a record because part of the information published online is available in this format.
- The definition of a record, as adopted by InterPARES 1, applies in part to Legacoop Bologna's documents; diplomatic analysis has shown that the documents on the Legacoop Bologna's Web site satisfy only a portion of the necessary components of a record, and is therefore a potential record.
- The Legacoop Bologna records satisfy the requirements of a record in the following ways:
  - The Web site is hosted on a web server, and therefore has a stable medium. The external form consists of html pages, and the internal form includes a SQL database system, images, and text. The content however, is not stable.
  - The Web site participates in the generation of information on, and about, the cooperative.
  - The documents on the Web site are linked only through a chronological numbering system indicating the sequence in which the documents are posted; the documents are not, however, linked in any other way, and in no way to the non-digital systems or to Legacoop Bologna's established recordkeeping system.
  - The Legacoop Web site demonstrates the involvement of all persons required (author, addressee, writer, creator and originator).
  - The Web site's documents possess identifiable juridical-administrative, provenancial, procedural, documentary and technological contexts.
- The Legacoop Bologna Web site documents, however, are not records, as defined by InterPARES 1, as there is currently no way to ensure the stability of their content. Furthermore, there is no archival bond beyond the date of posting, and the procedural context is under-developed.
- The documents on the Web site, however, can be considered potential records, as they are used as records by the creator, and the Web site is used as a place to post important documents. These include some documents that are not found elsewhere in the creator's fonds.

**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?

- While all paper records are registered, most e-mails currently are not; a record keeping system is used, but electronic records are not considered to be part of any formal recordkeeping system.
- Specific information related to the legal requirements and constraints regarding electronic records are not noted in the final report; Legacoop Bologna must adhere, however, to the following:
  - Italian legislation in the civil code specific to private administration, which includes rules regarding the preservation of a specific number of records.
  - Normative written value statements specifically for cooperatives.
- The case study notes that the creator does not focus on the web environment with the same quality and attention as is focused on the traditional documents; some documentary evidence, therefore, is being neglected.
- It is important to stress that Legacoop is a private company, and the requirements established by the Italian legislation are less strict than those applying to public administration.

**1.6** Is the move more dynamic and open-ended exchanges of information blurring the responsibilities and altering the legal liabilities of the participants in electronic transactions?

- The creator has not yet evaluated the Web site as a system for maintaining probative and dispositive records, despite the fact that some documents on the Web site are not available in paper form. The recordkeeping system in place has no relationship with the Web site.
  - The Web site was conceived only as a tool to increase cooperation with associate companies; it has, however, developed into an important collection of documents.
- Legacoop Bologna is not bound by any formal obligations short of an ethical obligation to ensure that information posted on the Web site is accurate and correct. In addition, it must adhere to the standards set forth by the ACI (International Cooperative Alliance), and the cooperative values paper published by the National Cooperative League.

**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?

- A registry system is applied to all the creator's traditional records; no similar rules currently exist for the digital documents published on the Web site, or for documents received in electronic forms (such as e-mails, as noted above).

- Therefore, the digital entities on the Web site are not currently part of Legacoop Bologna's recordkeeping system.
  - E-mail is only registered with judged to be of a certain importance; it is then most often printed and retained in paper format.
- Legacoop Bologna has no retention requirements for narrative and supporting documents; for example, advertisements and publications are not typically registered.
- Italian civil code, as noted above, defines those records that must be retained; these include the minutes of the management meetings and the board, the cooperative's statute, and financial records.
  - All records can be produced or copied, and kept in electronic form, so long as they feature a digital signature (which is required by Italian legislation for all electronic records, and in a case where the digitized version of a document substitutes the original paper documents).
  - These requirements, however, apply only to dispositive and probative records; the documents on Legacoop's Web site, may instead be considered to be supporting and narrative documents, and must not therefore meet these requirements.