



InterPARES 2 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

Diplomatic Analysis

Case Study 25: Legacoop of Bologna Web Site

Carolyn Petrie, UBC

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INTRODUCTION

InterPARES 2 case study 25 examines the creation and maintenance of Legacoop Bologna's Web site, which contains both static and interactive features. The Web site has four main functions: the publication of a newsletter, the publication of explanatory documents (such as consultants reports), job advertisements and an on-line job application system.

Legally recognized in 1947, Legacoop is a private company (cooperative), and provincial body of a larger national organization. The Web site, established in 2002, is considered to be a vital tool to the maintenance of the cooperative network between members and to the provision of information and services to both its members and the general public. The case study focuses specifically on those entities generated through the publication of the newsletter and the published material on the restricted area of the Web site, as both are becoming central repositories of information not found elsewhere. The following diplomatic analysis examines the Web site as a whole, to the extent to which pertinent information is found in the Final Report.

The purpose of the diplomatic analysis is to assess the status of the identified digital entity as a record. Once the status of the digital entity has been determined, preservation strategies may be proposed by Domain 3.

IDENTIFICATION OF RECORD(S)

A record, as defined by the InterPARES glossary, is a document made or received and set aside in the course of a practical activity. A record must also possess all of the following five components, as established by InterPARES 1 research conclusions: fixed content and form, embedded action, archival bond, persons and contexts. The application of the definition of a record to the creator's digital entities is therefore analyzed according to the following parameters:

1. To be identified as a record, the digital entity must possess fixed content and form,¹ and be affixed to a stable medium (or physical carrier).

Legacoop Bologna's Web site is affixed to a stable medium, hosted on a Web server accessible on both Unix and Windows platforms. The external form of the site consists of html pages, while the internal form includes a SQL database system, images, and text files (these include text and emails transferred to html format). Although the site's form is stable, the content is not; there are currently no policies in place to guard against manipulation or alteration, and each sector is free to create, change or transform the entities for which they are responsible.

2. A record must also participate in an action, defined as the conscious exercise of will by an officer of the creator or by an external person, aimed to create, maintain, modify or extinguish situations. A record results as an unintended by-product or product of the action.

The entities under examination are created as part of Legacoop Bologna's activity to generate information on, and for, the cooperative associations it represents, in accordance with its stated functions.

3. A record must possess an archival bond, which is the relationship that links each record to the previous and subsequent record of the same action and, incrementally, to all the records which participate in the same activity. The archival bond is originary (i.e., it comes into existence when a record is made or received and set aside), necessary (i.e., it exists for every record), and determined (i.e., it is characterized by the purpose of the record).

The various entities on the Web site are linked to each other only through a chronological numbering system indicating the sequence in which documents were posted. The digital entities are not, however, linked in any formal way to non-digital systems, and in particular to Legacoop's recordkeeping system.

4. Record creation must involve at least three persons, whether or not they explicitly appear in the record itself. These persons are the author, addressee and writer; in the electronic environment, one must also take into account two additional necessary persons: the creator and the originator.

- The record's **author** is the physical or juridical person having the authority and capacity to issue the record or in whose name or by whose command the record has been issued.

The author is Legacoop Bologna; the Communications Manager, specifically, is tasked with the overall responsibility of the site.

¹ The InterPARES1 Authenticity Task Force has defined fixed form as the following: 1) binary content of the record, including indicators of documentary form, must be stored in a manner that ensures it remains complete and unaltered, and 2) technology must be maintained and procedures defined and enforced to ensure that the content is presented or rendered with the same documentary form it had when set aside. (See ATF Research Methodology Statement, available at: http://www.interpares.org/documents/interpares_ResearchMethodologyStatement.pdf).

- The **addressee** the physical or juridical person(s) to whom the record is directed or for whom the record is intended.

There are three addressees: Legacoop itself, as the Web site contains important documents that are unavailable anywhere else; the association's registered users who can access the restricted area and receive the newsletter; and the public at large, who can access Legacoop's Web site through the Internet.

- The **writer** is the physical or juridical person having the authority and capacity to articulate the content of the record.

Each service unit is responsible for their documents and digital entities on the Web site. The creation and updating process is based on each editor's responsibilities, who must compile a form organized as a set of fields. The person responsible for each section has an access password.

- The **creator** is the person in whose fonds the record exists.

The creator is Legacoop Bologna, as the records exist in its fonds.

- The **originator** is the person to whom the Internet account issuing or the server holding the record belongs.

Although not made explicit in the Final Report, it is presumed that Legacoop Bologna owns the server upon which the Web site is hosted, and is thus the originator.

5. Finally, a record must possess an identifiable context, defined as the framework in which the action in which the record participates takes place. The types of context include juridical-administrative, provenancial, procedural, documentary, and technological.

- The **juridical-administrative context** is the legal and organizational system in which the creating body belongs.

Legacoop Bologna's juridical-administrative context includes the Italian juridical system's civil code, which defines the record types that must be maintained for the long-term; its own internal statutes, which define the association's governance and management; the principles of ACI (International Co-operative Alliance); and Lega Nazionale delle Cooperative e Mute, 1995.

- The **provenancial context** refers to the creating body, its mandate, structure and functions.

The provenancial context is the creating body, Legacoop Bologna, an association of enterprises operating in the Bologna area to promote the development of cooperation, mutual aid and solidarity, stimulate economic relationships and solidarity among member cooperatives, and spread the values and principles of the cooperation ideal.

The creator's mandate is to provide services to its members, and in particular, "as the local representative of the national Legacoop."² The functions include administration, consulting services, job searching, promotion, development and auditing. Legacoop is governed by an elected Board of Directors, Chair, Board of Auditors, and a Committee of Guarantees.

- The **procedural context** comprises the business procedure in the course of which the record is created.

The procedures associated with the creation of the Web site are not documented, as the Web site has been viewed as a separate entity from the regular business procedures. Legacoop manages the site internally through an ad-hoc editorial system.

[Editor's note: Analysis of the **procedural phases** was not carried out for this case study.]

- The **documentary context** is defined as the archival fonds to which a record belongs and its internal structure.

The entities belong to the fonds of Legacoop Bologna; the Web site, however, is considered separate entity unrelated to the company's recordkeeping system.

- **The technological context** is defined as the characteristics of the technological components of an electronic computing system in which records are created.

Legacoop Bologna's Web site resides on a Web server, which functions on all computers connected to the net and using Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher. Systems used include a SQL database, Unix and Windows platforms, JavaScript, html coding, and the BIGFILE software system for newsletter generation.

CONCLUSIONS

The above analysis of Legacoop Bologna demonstrates that the entities on the Web site do not satisfy all the requirements of a record. Specifically, current practices do not ensure stability of content, entities on the Web site do not possess an archival bond beyond a chronological record of their posting, and the procedural context is under-developed. Furthermore, several documents on the Web site may be considered publications, such as the member's newsletter.

The Web site and constituent documents, however, can be considered potential records; the act of setting the site aside will stabilize its content and will be link it to Legacoop's other administrative records as evidence of its activities.

² Case Study 25 Final Report, p. 3.