

InterPARES 3 Digital Records Preservation Proposals

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Date: November 16, 2007
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Introduction

InterPARES 3 is a funded initiative based at the University of British Columbia School of Library, Archival, and Information Systems, led by Dr. Luciana Duranti. InterPARES 1 and 2 have produced important documents related to assuring the authenticity, reliability, and preservation of archival (long-term) digital records. InterPARES 3 is the follow up study that aims to use client partners to apply the relatively-new preservation processes and standards to solve the preservation issues that Archives have for the preservation of electronic records.

BCIT has an opportunity to be a client, or test-bed, partner for InterPARES 3. As a client partner of this project, BCIT would have two graduate Archives students assigned to it for the two projects that BCIT proposes. Each student is called a “researcher” and works for approximately 10 hours each week. Researchers have been trained with the expertise and knowledge of the standards, processes, and policy issues for assuring the authenticity, reliability, and preservation of archival digital records. The researchers would work with BCIT records management and archives staff to accomplish the goals of the BCIT projects.

The benefits of having BCIT participate as a client partner for InterPARES 3 include:

- Researchers have electronic records authenticity, reliability, and preservation knowledge that BCIT staff lack
- Researchers are paid by InterPARES 3, so there is no cost to BCIT
- Researchers work with BCIT’s professional archivist and records manager to solve BCIT’s electronic records issues so the solutions will meet BCIT’s needs.

The downside of not participating in InterPARES is that BCIT’s records manager would need to devote more 32 person weeks to gain the knowledge and invest in the time to produce the deliverables that are proposed in these two client partner projects. Dovetailing this volume of work with the records manager’s other duties means that it would take 1-2 years to complete the deliverables instead of 8-9 months. BCIT stands to lose a large volume of digital records, unless these preservation issues are addressed sooner rather than later.

Proposal 1. BCIT Digital Records Preservation Policy and Procedures Development

The Problem

BCIT currently has two viable policies related to records management and archival records: Records Management (policy number 6701) and Archives and Special Collections (policy 6702). A records retention schedule identifies both digital and hard copy records that have long term retention in the BCIT Archives. BCIT has an established procedure to assure the long-term preservation of records in paper and film formats, but no policy or procedures currently exist concerning the long term preservation of digital records. Examples of these digital records are: Program Advisory Committee minutes, Board of Governor Minutes, BCIT policies, Education Council Minutes, program change proposals and approvals, vital Web content and many more. These important records are at risk of being lost through technology obsolescence, and they are vital to the Institute's history.

Approach and Key Activities

BCIT proposes to have the InterPARES 3 researchers work with BCIT's records manager and archivist to identify the scope of the policy, research the best practice models that are published within InterPARES 3 data repositories and elsewhere, and draft a policy that is tailored the unique needs of the BCIT records management and archives programs. The policy would describe "what" should happen with regards to digital records preservation.

Following the development of the policy, we would draft achievable procedures that assign responsibilities, tasks, and outcomes that will be necessary to make the policy fully operational. The drafts would be reviewed by the Director, Library and Related Services and the Director, Information Technology Services (ITS). The drafts will be edited and finalized. The two delivered documents would be: *1. BCIT Policy on Digital Records Preservation*, and *2. BCIT Procedures for Digital Records Preservation*.

Timing and Assessment Criteria

We expect that the project will involve 2-4 hours per week for each of BCIT's records manager and archivist over a 3-4 month period, plus the time of 10-20 hours per week of the InterPARES researchers. This project will be successful when the two BCIT Directors sign off on the policies and procedures.

Proposal 2. BCIT Digital Records Preservation Solution

The Problem

Following the drafting of BCIT's digital records preservation policy and procedures, BCIT will need a technical and business process solution to preserve digital records in the electronic format that will withstand technology obsolescence. BCIT currently does not have the expertise in-house to develop a solution. Without knowing the technical tools, the business processes, the archival and technical standards, BCIT will not be able to develop the solution on its own.

Approach and Key Activities

BCIT proposes to have the InterPARES 3 researchers work with BCIT's records manager and archivist to prepare a flowchart of the business process involved in digital records preservation, based on best practices and industry standards. The deliverable of this activity will be the *BCIT Digital Records Preservation Flowchart*.

The BCIT contacts and researchers will then identify the technology tools needed to implement the flowchart, and prepare the specifications for technologies it does not own, a budget for the technology/ies, and or determine if the tools are available at no cost. The deliverable of this activity will be the *Digital Records Preservation Technology Tools* report.

The BCIT contacts and researchers will develop a plan to implement the digital records preservation process and technologies over a 1 to 5 year horizon. This plan will be submitted in draft to the Director, Library and Related Services and the Director, Information Technology Services (ITS) for review and input. The plan will be edited and issued in final form. The deliverable of this activity will be the *BCIT Digital Records Preservation Implementation Plan*.

Timing and Assessment Criteria

We expect that the project will involve 2-4 hours per week for each of BCIT's records manager and archivist over a 4-5 months week period, plus the time of 10-20 hours per week of the InterPARES researchers. This project will be successful when the two BCIT Directors sign off on the delivered documents. It is expected that the plans will be feasible to implement to achieve the goal of digital records preservation.

Summary

By undertaking these two InterPARES projects, BCIT will be in a position, in approximately 8-9 months, to implement a solution to digital records preservation as a pilot project in the fiscal year 2008/2009, on the assumption that BCIT either currently owns or is able to procure any nominal funds to purchase technology. BCIT will also have a plan to procure the necessary tools and a plan to cover five years to preserve important, historical digital records.