

SSHRC-CURA TEAM : City of Vancouver Case Study Proposal 01

The City of Vancouver Archives is proposing a case study examining the implementation of electronic records and document management system (ERDMS) software in the City of Vancouver.

Background

The City of Vancouver has recently begun planning for the acquisition and installation of an (ERDMS). Currently, there is little if any control over the electronic recordkeeping environment within the City.

- Office documents created as part of routine business at the City are created without any procedural controls, and are stored on shared network drives that have basic security controls and back-up procedures, but do not incorporate features that can be used to establish the authenticity or reliability of the records.
- There are many database systems that may contain records. Other than the VanMap system which was the subject of an InterPARES 2 case study, none of these systems have undergone analysis to determine if they create and maintain records.
- Document management software systems have been adopted by some departments to address their operational requirements. These systems are not recordkeeping systems. In many cases the full capabilities of the document management software is not being used.

Planning for the implementation of ERDMS software began in 2005 as part of the work undertaken in developing and implementing a City wide integrated records classification system and retention schedule (called VanRIMS). Funding for the project was approved as part of the 2006-2009 Capital Plan budget referendum submitted to the electorate in the 2005 municipal election. A project charter has been completed, and it is anticipated the project business case will be submitted to Council for approval in December 2006.

The specific objectives of the City's efforts are described in the ERDMS project charter are:

... to plan for, acquire, design, configure and deploy standards-certified, policy/legislation-compliant ERDMS software to 5000 desktops in all major divisions; to retire or integrate with legacy systems such as: PC Docs, Versatile, and Domino; to Plan and implement a pilot Digital Archives; and to train City and Project staff in the use of the ERDMS. The ERDMS will become the City software standard for records and document management.

Significant events from the current proposed project timeline are provided below:

March 2007	Issue Request for Proposal
August 2007	Select vendor
October 2007	Plan software configuration

February 2008 Pilot implementation

Proposal

The City of Vancouver Archives proposes a case study examining the implementation of ERDMS software in the City. The perceived value in such a study would be providing an opportunity to test the findings of IP 1 and 2 within the context of a large municipal government that is in the early stages of exerting proper controls over its electronic recordkeeping environment.

By offering itself as a potential case study, the City of Vancouver seeks to benefit from the expertise and knowledge created by the InterPARES projects. Specifically, it is expected that the research conducted will provide tangible contributions to:

- The successful implementation of electronic records management technology at the City of Vancouver.
- The evaluation and improvement of recordkeeping practices at the City.
- Efforts to establish a digital archives program capable of preserving electronic records created by the City, its boards and agencies, as well as private records acquired from the community.

The core research of the case study would involve an examination of the initial planning for the acquisition and installation of an ERDMS at the City. This could potentially include:

An analysis of project requirements drawn from planning documentation such as the project charter and RFP to establish whether or not the project and system requirements sufficiently describe a recordkeeping system capable of creating and maintaining authentic and reliable records.

An analysis of the implementation of the system that results from the project to determine if the system does in fact create and maintain authentic and reliable records

Applying the findings of the InterPARES projects to the configuration of the ERDMS software to ensure:

- The system creates and maintains authentic and reliable records.
- Records from the system can be ingested into an OAIS compliant digital preservation environment.

Other avenues of investigation could examine processes involved in the specification and configuration of an ERDMS, installation of the software, introduction of recordkeeping processes and procedures that support the use of the software, or otherwise incorporates research in electronic recordkeeping into actual practice within the City of Vancouver.

Complementary research that might be undertaken in addition to the investigation of the ERDMS implementation could include:

Incorporating the findings of InterPARES into the development of the submission requirements and policies that will define the interface between the ERDMS and the digital archives that will be charged with the permanent preservation of the City's electronic records.

Identifying other systems within the City independent of the ERDMS to determine if InterPARES findings can be applied to those systems to make them better recordkeeping systems.

Examining how records generated within the ERDMS system compare to similar types of records that are created and maintained in uncontrolled environments, or within systems that are subject to different recordkeeping requirements. Examples include:

- Electronic records created prior to the implementation of ERDMS software, including records maintained in unstructured environments such as network file servers or e-mail servers.
- Electronic records created and maintained within other systems: permits and licensing records within the Community Services workflow and document management system (called Domino)
- Electronic records that exist within the City's SAP management information system.
- Electronic records created by the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Organizing Committee (VANOC) received by the Archives after the conclusion of the games.