



InterPARES 3 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems

TEAM Canada

Title: Case Study 13 – Vancouver School of Theology (VST): Policies and Procedures for Creation, Management and Preservation of Administrative Digital Records: Workshop 04 Action Item 40 – Records Management Policy

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Document Control

Version history			
<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>By</u>	<u>Version notes</u>
1.0	2009-11-01	C. Rogers, A. van Dijk	Discussion draft prepared following identification of action items for CS40 at TEAM Canada Plenary Workshop 04.
2.0	2009-11-03	C. Rogers, A. van Dijk	Revisions based on feedback from L. Duranti.
2.1	2009-11-03	R. Preston	Minor content and copy edits.
2.2	2013-05-21	R. Preston	Minor content and copy edits.

Action 40: G. McLeod, with assistance from the Graduate Research Assistants assigned to case study 13, to develop an overall digital records management policy for the entire School.¹

Vancouver School of Theology
Records Management Policy – Draft November 2, 2009
(for the creation and maintenance of VST records, digital or paper)

Preamble

This policy is a first step in developing a records management program for paper and digital records at the Vancouver School of Theology (VST) and articulates management's commitment to better governance through proper records management. It precedes the development of a records classification system based on the functions of the School, appropriate retention schedules and procedures. These instruments are being developed as part of a case study in the InterPARES (International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems) 3 Project,² in which VST is a test-bed partner. Although this policy's recommendations will, over time, be applied to all the records of the School, the InterPARES 3 case study focuses on the administrative records of the Office of the Principal, and this is where the work will commence.

The policy and procedures are being developed in accordance with guidelines set out by the InterPARES 1 and 2 Projects³ for the creation, maintenance and preservation of authentic and reliable digital records, and will apply to all VST's records, regardless of form or medium.

This policy will become effective as of [date]

Policy Statement

VST recognizes that efficient management of its records, regardless of form or medium, is essential to support the work of the School, to facilitate governance and management, and to enable the School to comply with legal and regulatory obligations. VST is committed to developing an effective records management program that will promote record accessibility and support VST in meeting its obligations for accountability and protection of privacy, reducing risk and maximizing efficiency.

This policy provides a framework for the creation, management and ongoing preservation of VST's records on any medium that are authentic, reliable and accessible for current and future use.

¹ InterPARES 3 Project, "TEAM Canada Plenary Workshop #04: Action Items and Decisions."

² See http://www.interpares.org/ip3/ip3_index.cfm.

³ See http://www.interpares.org/ip1/ip1_index.cfm and http://www.interpares.org/ip2/ip2_index.cfm.

Authority

Legislation:

Vancouver School of Theology Act (1993)

Personal Information Protection Act BC

Policies and Standards:

- VST Privacy Policy⁴
- Association of Theological Schools (AST) of North America General Institutional Standards⁵

Application

This policy applies to all staff, faculty and administrators of VST.

Definitions

Accessibility: The availability, intelligibility and usability of information.

Accuracy: The degree to which data, information, documents or records are precise, correct, truthful, free of error or distortion, or pertinent to the matter.

Archival description: Information that serves to identify, manage, locate and explain archival materials and the context and records systems which produced it.

Authenticity: The quality of a record that it is what it purports to be and that it is free from tampering or corruption. A record is considered authentic when its identity and integrity can be ascertained.

Complete record: A record that contains all the elements required by the creator and the juridical system for it to be capable of generating consequences.

Digital record: A digital document that is treated and managed as a record.

Record: A document, or recorded information, made or received in the conduct of business, and set aside for action or reference for the delivery of VST programs and services, to carry out operations, to make decisions and to account for activities. Any record made or received in the course of an employee's or contractor's duties at VST is the property of VST with the exception of teaching and research materials as covered in the VST Faculty Handbook and in accordance with British Columbia's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).⁶

Reliability: The trustworthiness of a record as a statement of fact. It exists when a record can stand for the fact it is about, and is established by examining the completeness of the record's form and the amount of control exercised on the process of its creation.

⁴ Available at <http://www.vst.edu/pdfs/policies/VST%20Privacy%20Policy.pdf>.

⁵ Available at <http://www.ats.edu/Accrediting/Documents/08GeneralStandards.pdf>.

⁶ Available at

[http://www.oipc.bc.ca/legislation/FIPPA/Freedom_of_Information_and_Protection_of_Privacy_Act\(May2008\).htm](http://www.oipc.bc.ca/legislation/FIPPA/Freedom_of_Information_and_Protection_of_Privacy_Act(May2008).htm).

Trustworthiness: The accuracy, reliability and authenticity of a record.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of this policy is to ensure that complete, accurate and reliable records of all activities and decisions, regardless of medium or format, are created, managed and retained or disposed of appropriately, and in accordance with relevant legislation, policies and standards.

The policy has the following objectives:

- to ensure that accurate and reliable records are created, and maintained authentic to support the work of the Vancouver School of Theology;
- to ensure that complete, accurate and reliable records are readily accessible to staff and administration as needed to perform all job duties; and
- to define roles and responsibilities of staff and administrators for records creation, maintenance, retention and disposition

Scope

This policy provides for the creation, assessment and maintenance of records in any medium. Records created in the usual and ordinary course of business are presumed to be trustworthy; that is, they are accurate, reliable and authentic, and are capable of supporting and managing the work of the School. VST will establish and follow procedures in support of this policy to ensure that all records are trustworthy from the moment of their creation through their use and ongoing maintenance. Specific procedures are required for the maintenance and preservation of digital records on a continuous basis from the moment of creation (keeping in mind that it is not possible to preserve the physical (digital) record, but only the ability to reproduce that record.)

Records should be kept only as long as they are needed for action or reference and be properly destroyed or transferred to the Archives according to retention schedules that reflect the needs of the School and follow legal and regulatory guidelines. Appraisal of digital records is an ongoing activity required to ensure their ongoing trustworthiness and usability (the records are still deemed authentic and are accessible), to be accomplished through procedures that will be developed and monitored. In the absence of retention schedules formally approved by VST, records should not be destroyed.

All maintenance and preservation activities will be fully documented as a primary means of protecting and assessing authenticity over the long term. VST presumes that records in any medium it creates in the usual and ordinary course of business are authentic, but will ensure that records creation and maintenance will be strictly controlled so that the presumption of authenticity will have a strong procedural foundation. Digital records are vulnerable to inappropriate alteration and are most at risk when transmitted across space (when sent between persons, systems or applications) and time (either when they are stored off-line or when hardware or software used to process, communicate or maintain them is upgraded or replaced). VST will develop and implement procedures to ensure that these records are protected from intentional, accidental or incidental alteration.

Paper records identified for permanent preservation will be transferred to the custody of the Archives when they reach the end of their active life in accordance with retention schedules to be

developed. Digital records will remain in the custody of their creator, maintained and preserved according to the accompanying procedures until such time when the Archives will have the technological ability to preserve them. Hybrid series/files (where paper and digital records co-exist) will be linked through digital metadata and archival description. When the Archives will be able to accept digital materials, inactive digital records identified for permanent preservation will be transferred to the Archives.

Duties and Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for records management policy and procedures, and for supporting their application throughout the organization, resides in the Office of the Principal. All employees of VST have a duty to create and maintain trustworthy records according to the procedures related to this policy.

Director – Records Management and Privacy (or designate)

- Raise awareness of records management issues with staff and administrators;
- Develop, with input from and in consultation with administrators, a records classification scheme, and retention and disposition schedules for all records, regardless of their medium;
- Identify, with input from and in consultation with administrators, existing digital records, ensure their trustworthiness according to the InterPARES 1 Project’s “Benchmark Requirements Supporting the Presumption of Authenticity of Electronic Records,”⁷ and determine and maintain their relationships with corresponding paper records;
- Advise, train and support staff in implementing records management procedures;
- Work with the IT Director to select hardware, software and file formats that offer the best likelihood of interoperability and continuing accessibility over time; and
- Monitor progress in implementation of procedures, providing support as necessary.

Director – IT

- Conduct business analyses to determine the requirements for managing VST’s digital records; and
- Provide the technological infrastructure, including installation of software applications, to support the effective maintenance of digital records in accordance with this policy.

Administrative Staff Group (Directors)

- Ensure that relevant procedures are in place in their departments, that staff are trained, and that procedures are assessed to manage effectively the records of their departments.

Staff

- Participate in training to understand their role in supporting VST’s records management program.

⁷ Available at http://www.interpares.org/book/interpares_book_k_app02.pdf.

Conclusion

Records are at the heart of management accountability, management of information, access to information and protection of privacy. Records provide the basis of sound internal decision-making and optimal delivery of services.

VST depends increasingly on computer technology to create notes, drafts and official records upon which it relies. As well, business is mostly conducted by e-mail. Increasingly, digital records are becoming the records of choice, superseding paper records. Computer systems encourage information sharing and collaboration in decisions. However, control of digital records is difficult precisely because of the real-time nature of electronic communication and the capacity to share documents and ideas within and outside the organization. Control needs to be established at the point of creation to ensure trustworthy and complete records.

This policy is the first step in the management and control of this important asset. Adherence to this policy, supported by classification, retention and disposition schedules, and accompanying procedures, will establish control on the creation and growth of records, improve efficiency and reduce operating costs through time lost searching for records, ensure regulatory and legal compliance, safeguard vital information, support better decision making, preserve our institutional memory, and foster professionalism.