



InterPARES 3 Project

International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems
TEAM Canada

General Study Research Proposal Organizational Culture

Version 5.2, November 2009

Background and Rationale for Study

One of the findings from InterPARES 2 was that the organizational culture of the record creators and preservers affects any recommended solutions in record creation and digital preservation strategies. As noted by the Policy Cross-domain task force,

Where organizational culture is conducive to the development of policies and procedures and the adoption of standards, there are controlled aspects of record creation, maintenance, preservation and use. Of the environments studied, government and some scientific organizations developed or adopted policies and procedures, while individual artists or small, temporary partnerships did not. In these latter organizations, the extent of control on recordkeeping through policies, procedures and the adoption of standards is effective nil.¹

Organizational culture also appears to be a prevailing theme in the InterPARES 3 TEAM Canada case studies. For example, the final report for the Museum of Anthropology case study (CS07) identified “institutional culture” as one of the factors which impeded the completion of the case study.² Similarly, in the case of the Facilities Development case study at Simon Fraser University (CS10-2), the existing organizational culture was perceived as “uncommitted to good records management practices.”³

¹ Luciana Duranti, Jim Suderman and Malcolm Todd, “Part Seven—Structuring the Relationship Between Records Creators and Preservers: Policy Cross-domain Task Force Report,” in *International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES) 2: Experiential, Interactive and Dynamic Records*, Luciana Duranti and Randy Preston, eds. (Padova, Italy: Associazione Nazionale Archivistica Italiana, 2008), 373.

² Cristina Drego, “Case Study 07 – Museum of Anthropology Archives: Case Study Report,” InterPARES 3 Project, TEAM Canada (v1.2, May 2009), 7. Available at http://www.interpares.org/rws/display_file.cfm?doc=ip3_canada_cs07_final_report_v1-2.pdf.

³ Donald Force and Leah Pearse, “Case Study 10(2) – Simon Fraser University Archives, Facilities Development: Case Study Report,” InterPARES 3 Project, TEAM Canada (v2.1, August 2009), 11. Available at http://www.interpares.org/rws/display_file.cfm?doc=ip3_canada_cs10-2_final_report_v2-1.pdf.

Objective of Research

The objective of this research on organizational culture is to develop a consistent framework to analyze its impact on recordkeeping and preservation practices across various case studies in InterPARES 3 within the national context of Canada. Findings gleaned from this research may also be applicable to a general study of the dynamics amongst organizational cultures, recordkeeping and preservation practices for all the other countries participating in InterPARES 3.

Research Questions

- Question 1: How does organizational culture affect the selection and implementation of recordkeeping and/or digital records preservation systems?
- Hypothesis 1: Corporate and/or occupational subcultures may lead to tensions and conflicts amongst stakeholders and are a significant barrier towards the successful implementation of recordkeeping and/or digital records preservation systems.

Conversely,

- Hypothesis 2: An organizational climate that values the sharing of knowledge with multiple stakeholders in an organization, accords priority in recordkeeping and/or preservation and has a supportive management climate in recordkeeping and/or preservation is more receptive towards developing a sustainable records and/or preservation infrastructure.
- Question 2: To what extent does organizational culture affect the ability of InterPARES 3 in carrying out its research in the test-bed sites? What conditions would be necessary with respect to organizational culture for InterPARES 3 to carry out its research in the test-bed?
- Hypothesis 3: The varying levels of support amongst stakeholders from an organization are an impediment to the successful completion of research and product implementation test-bed sites in InterPARES 3.
- Question 3: What are the fundamental similarities and differences in organizational culture with respect to recordkeeping and/or preservation practices of different organizations within and across similar industries? Within the same organization, what are the variations of sub- or professional cultures that shape recordkeeping and/or preservation practices?
- Hypothesis 4: There could be both converging and diverging views in defining the concept of a record as well as in recordkeeping and/or preservation issues amongst various subcultures and within the same subculture from both within and across industries. There may be subcultures which identify more strongly with the prevailing institutional culture, while others may associate with their professional subcultures in the form of professional organizations and networks outside the formal organization structure.

- Question 4: What are the varying levels of expectations stakeholders have in terms of their roles and responsibilities in recordkeeping/and or preservation as well as their expectations of other stakeholders?
- Hypothesis 5: Different groups of stakeholders have differing understandings and expectations of their roles and responsibilities in recordkeeping and/or preservation as well as the roles and responsibilities of other stakeholders in terms of recordkeeping and/or preservation. This may potentially be a barrier towards the successful implementation of a recordkeeping and/or preservation programme.
- Question 5: What are the methodologies for facilitating the selection and implementation of recordkeeping and/or digital records preservation systems?
- Hypothesis 6: A risk assessment model and project toolkit, anchored on the type of organizational culture, industry and organizational configuration, could be developed. In addition, specific policies and strategies to facilitate the selection and implementation of recordkeeping and/or digital records preservation systems could be formulated for the stakeholders within an organization.

Methodology of Research

The research will be both deductive and inductive in nature and will be anchored in grounded theory. The literature review will draw upon aspects of organizational culture from organizational theory, sociology, information systems and information management perspectives, while the field work will consist of semi-structured interviews with test-bed partners (archivists, records managers, records creators, IT specialists, and senior management) and the Graduate Research Assistants assigned to the InterPARES 3 TEAM Canada case studies. There also will be an analysis of issues relating to organizational culture based on a review of the discussion of the case studies contained in the proceedings from the InterPARES 3 TEAM Canada plenary workshops, existing research and documentary sources from the case studies such as the final reports, answers to research questions and contextual analysis. Definitions for key terms gleaned from the literature—such as organizational culture, organizational climate, subculture and professional culture—as well as replies from the participants of the research will be coded and analyzed using NVivo software to provide an in-depth qualitative analysis.

Plan of Action

Activities	Target Dates
1. Presentation of research proposal on general study on organizational culture, findings of key principles and concepts of organizational culture based on literature review.	TEAM Canada Plenary Workshop 5: 25-27 November 2009
2. Develop a set of semi-structured interview questions, identify and approach participants to be interviewed. Continue with literature review and address any gaps based on feedback/comments from TEAM Canada Plenary Workshop 5.	December 2009
3. Complete interviews and coding responses. Analysis of literature review.	March 2010
4. Complete final report for general study of organizational culture and develop preliminary draft of strategies and policies to facilitate the selection and implementation of recordkeeping and/or digital preservation systems.	April 2010
5. Presentation of findings for general study of organizational culture and draft strategies and policies.	TEAM Canada Plenary Workshop 6: 26-28 May 2010
6. Amend draft strategies and policies arising from feedback/comments from TEAM Canada Plenary Workshop 6. Development of draft risk assessment model and project toolkit.	September 2010
7. Presentation of risk assessment model and project toolkit	TEAM Canada Plenary Workshop 7: 24-26 November 2010

Research Team

Lead investigator: Vicki Lemieux

Co-investigator: Ron Cenfetelli

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Dissemination Activities

- Student paper for ACA Conference, 9-12 June 2010 (deadline for submission: 25 Jan 2010)
- Panel discussion for AABC Conference in 2010 (dates are not yet announced)
- Panel discussion for ACA Conference, 2-4 June 2011
- ICA Congress, 20-24 Aug 2012