Persistent Digital Archives and Library System (PeDALS)

RICHARD PEARCE-MOSES

Abstract: PeDALS is a research project investigating automated processing of large sets of electronic records.

In PeDALS, archivists develop business rules that describe the steps involved in curating a collection, from acquisition through description, to access and preservation. Those business rules are then implemented in middleware. For example, acquisition rules check the integrity of file transfers. Description rules normalize and enhance any received metadata to me administrative, discovery, and preservation needs. Preservation rules create an archival information package for long-term storage. Dissemination rules create a browser-friendly version of the record for public web access. The project shifts the focus from working with records to working with rules, with the result that many more records can be processed much more quickly.

PeDALS also seeks to develop a community of shared practice and a common technical infrastructure. This collaborative approach will minimize the cost of developing separate, incompatible systems and will save money through code sharing.

This presentation will summarize project findings, including insights on digital recordkeeping practices, how archival practice was adapted based on processing a variety of digitized and born-digital collections, and efforts to develop a collaborative to support the project.

PeDALS is funded by the Library of Congress National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP). Project partners are from Arizona, Alabama, Florida, New Mexico, New York, South Carolina, and Wisconsin.

About the author:

Richard Pearce-Moses served as principal investigator of the PeDALS project while he was Deputy Director for Technology and Information Resources at Arizona State Library and Archives. In June 2010 he became the Director of the Master of Archival Studies Program at Clayton State University in Morrow, Georgia.

He has been a professional archivist for more than twenty years and has been a member of the Academy of Certified Archivist since its inception. Pearce-Moses has a Master of Science in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2001), a Master of American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin (1987), and a Bachelor of Journalism from the University of Texas at Austin (1976).

He has worked with a variety of subjects and formats, including photography, regional history, Native American art and culture, and state and local government. For the past decade, he has focused on digital archives and libraries, including finding ways to capture and preserve digital publications on the Web and new ways to automate processing electronic records.