Case Study: Digital Records Preservation at British Columbia Institute of Technology

Or

How do you preserve digital records in a million-dollar organization when everyone has a million other things to worry about?

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Background:
The InterPARES Project

• The International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES)
• developing knowledge essential to the long-term preservation of authentic records created and/or maintained in digital form
• providing the basis for standards, policies, strategies and plans of action capable of ensuring the longevity of such material and the ability of its users to trust its authenticity
Key Findings from IP1 & IP2

- Concept of original in digital environment
- Ability to preserve begins at creation
- Articulated in the Creator and Preserver Guidelines
Development of Policies & Procedures

- A framework of principles guiding the development of policies for records creating and preserving organizations
Context: British Columbia Institute of Technology

- BC’s largest post-secondary institution
- 16,000 FT & 32,000 PT students
- Certificate, diploma and applied bachelor’s degrees
- Over 2,000 FT & PT faculty and staff
- Five campuses & six schools (faculties)
- One Associate Director, Privacy & Records Management

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InterPARES 3 & British Columbia Institute of Technology

- British Columbia Institute of Technology was accepted as the first case study in InterPARES 3
- Over 100,000,000 digital records
- Purpose: to develop policy & procedures for preservation of digital records
- Applying retention to paper but only to a fraction of digital records
Transformation of BC IT's Culture: from paper to digital

Director of Records

The Digital Office

Centralized

Policy, procedures, retention applied

Archives for Preservation

The Paper-based Office

Decentralized

IT for storage

Policy, procedures outdated; retention not applied

Director of Records

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Specific issues

- Record-keeping culture
- Relationship between RM & IT
- Privacy & security
- FOI
- E-discovery
- Role of the archives and the archivist
Development of Policy & Procedures - Methodology

- Analysis of record keeping environment
- Analysis of existing policy and procedure
- Draft policy for long-term digital preservation
- Semi-structured interviews
- Crosswalk between IP2 guidelines for creation of authentic, reliable digital records
- Develop template for analysis of interview data
- Draft procedures to complement policy
Creator Guidelines

- Accessibility
- Fixity
- Identity
- Integrity
- Organization
- Authentication
- Protection
- Backup
- Obsolescence
- Awareness
Accessibility

**Digital Records Preservation Policy 6701-PR2**
- RM consults w/ business units and ITS on selecting hw/sw and file formats
- Archivist advises administrators on issues of long-term maintenance and issues affecting perm. preservation if multiple owners occur
- Archivist advises on documentation req’d to be produced on reproduction processes, monitoring and technical requirements for access
- Custodians implement maintenance strategies
- ITS provides tech. infrastructure/installs & supports software applications
- Creators have duty to create and maintain reliable authentic records

**RM Policy 6701**
- Not directly addressed

**RM Procedures 6701-PR1**
- Not directly addressed except to ensure electronic docs are verifiable as evidence

**Interview data**
- Departments choose software/hardware that is suitable to their functions (e.g. surveys, focus groups, student records, Lotus Notes, etc.);
- No obvious documentation of customizations or modifications;
- Majority of departments using proprietary formats and systems;
- Most departments don’t have documented file formats

**Draft Guidelines 6701-GU**
Records Manager/Archivist
- Identify/suggest widely adopted; non-proprietary; well-documented; interoperable; uncompressed or lossless compression

Records Administrators (in each business unit)
- With RM/Arch, choose appropriate software/applications
- Document all choices
- Document all changes

Records Custodians
- Ensure approved choices are being used

Records Creators
- Use approved software and applications

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Framework of policies/procedures

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Policy

Records Management Policy

Archives and Special Collections Policy

Records Management Procedures

Digital Records Preservation Policy

Digital Records Preservation Procedures

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