

Original Order: Lost in Cyberspace?

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Abstract: Respect for original order is one of the unshakable bedrocks of both archival science and practice. But can it fly - in cyberspace? While the principal of preserving the way the records creator arranged its records to serve its needs is fundamental to the existence and management of records, on examination it becomes obvious that the articulation of the concept of original order is derived from an obsolete information technology, that of hard copy records. With hard copy, the only practical way to maintain relationships among records is by physical collocation within folders and filing stations. The Research Forum presentation will explore the conceptual foundations of 'original order,' summarize some novel ways records creators are using ICT capabilities to materialize archival links among records; and engage a discussion of whether such considerations should lead to a reevaluation of what 'respect' for original order entails in cyberspace.

About the author:

Dr. Kenneth Thibodeau is Director of the Center for Advanced Systems and Technologies (NCAST) at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) of the U.S. Until recently, he served as Director of the Electronic Records Archives (ERA) program at NARA. Under his direction NARA successfully developed and implemented two versions of the ERA system serving the different needs of NARA's mission in the areas of federal and presidential records.

Dr. Thibodeau has 35 years experience in archives and records management, and is an internationally recognized expert in electronic records. He has served as Chief of the Records Management Branch of the National Institutes of Health, Director of the Center for Electronic Records at NARA, and Director of the Department of Defense Records Management Task Force.

A Fellow of the Society of American Archivists and winner of the Emmett Leahy Award for outstanding contributions to the information and records management profession, in 2008 he was given a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Archivist of the United States for pioneering contributions moving the National Archives to the forefront of e-government.

Thibodeau has published over 30 papers and spoken at more than 150 conferences around the world. He earned a Ph.D. in the history and sociology of science from the University of Pennsylvania, and held several post doctoral fellowships in computer science.