

Digital archival diplomatics

Translating into French some of the findings of the InterPARES 2 Project

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Disseminating some of the findings of the InterPARES Project

Considerable research work conducted by the InterPARES Project :

- a complex object of study : digital archival diplomatics
- concepts drawn from traditional diplomatics

In France, no theoretical approach but :

- norms, common standards and frameworks
- recordkeeping policies

Can the InterPARES research findings be applied to the French context ?

Joint Research Project, École nationale des chartes et ministère de la Culture (Service interministériel des Archives de France).

The InterPARES Project

From InterPARES 1 to IP Trust

- International research on permanent authentic records in electronic systems (www.interpares.org)
- Three phases, from 1999 to 2012 : InterPARES 1 (1999-2001), InterPARES 2 (2002-2007), InterPARES 3 (2007-2012)
- IP-Trust (2013-)

InterPARES 1 (1999-2001) :

- Stable and fixed digital objects
- Digital records diplomatics : creation context (records creator) ; preservation context (records preserver).

Key finding : it is not possible to preserve digital records but only the ability to reproduce them.

The InterPARES Project

Scope

- Records creator perspective
- Arts, sciences and administrative domains
- Records digitally produced in interactive, dynamic and experiential systems

Methodology

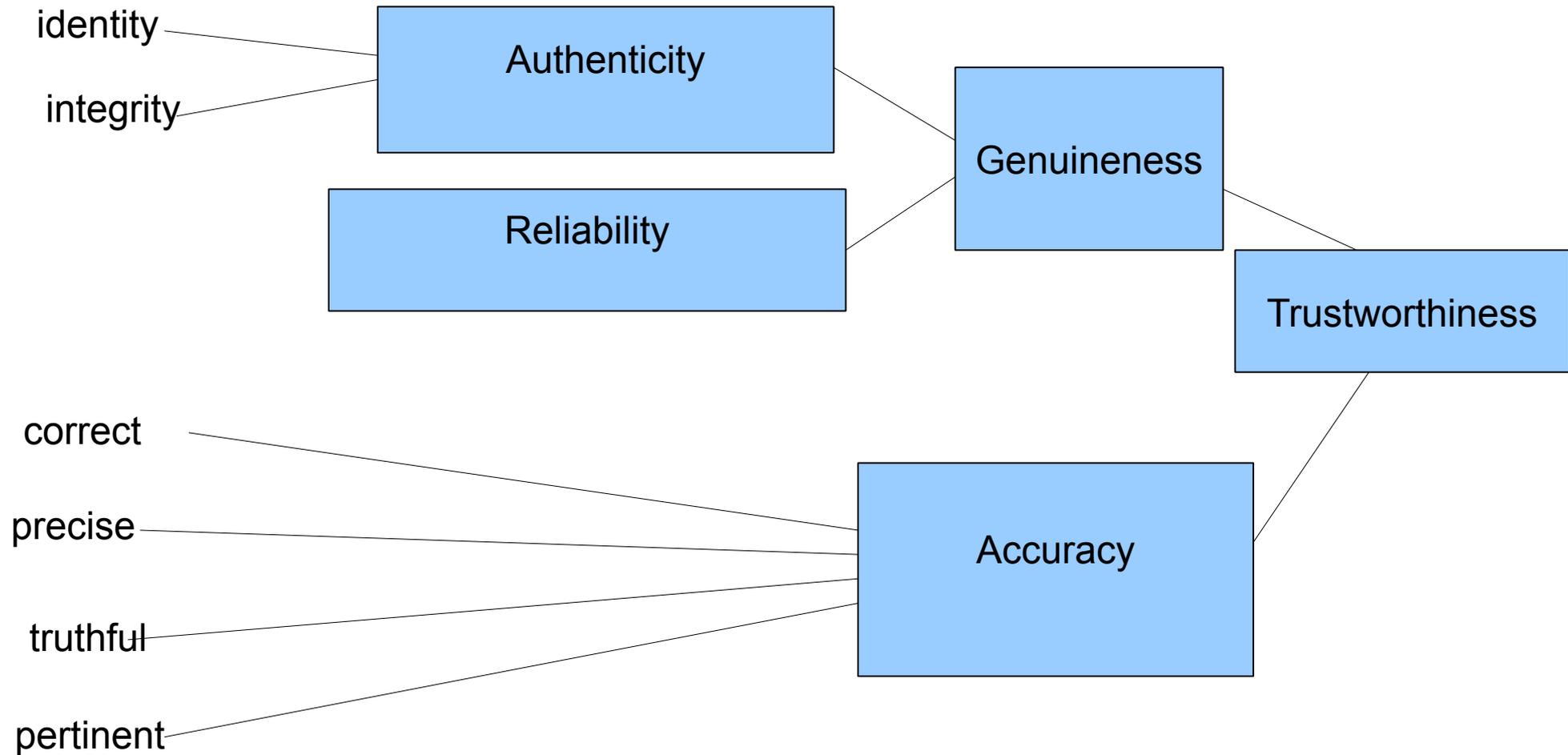
- Case studies and general studies
- Domain task forces
- Cross-domain task forces (policy ; modeling ; terminology ; description)
- Focus task forces :
 - records creation and maintenance
 - reliability, accuracy and authenticity
 - evaluation and preservation

The InterPARES Project :

InterPARES 2

- Reviewed and compared legislation and government policies from different countries and different levels of government, from the national to the municipal
- Modeled the functions that make up records creation and maintenance and records preservation according to the records lifecycle and *records continuum* models
- Developed a conceptual model : records creator perspective / records preserver perspective
- Studied the concept of « trustworthiness » and its components, reliability, accuracy and authenticity
- Analyzed many metadata initiatives and developed a tool to identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing metadata schemes in relation to questions of reliability, accuracy and authenticity

InterPARES 2 Key Concepts



InterPARES 2 Key Concepts

Digital component, stored record, kept record

- shift in the language of digital preservation : from the concept of the preservation of « the record » to an acknowledgment of the importance of identifying and preserving « digital components » and their relationship
- the intellectual and physical components of a digital record do not necessarily coincide ; the digital components might themselves constitute a record or a set of records
- digitally stored records include not only the data which must be processed in order to represent the manifest record but also the rules for processing the data, including rules which enable variations in the content or form of the manifested record
- digital components should be maintained independently and re-assembled over time

InterPARES 2 Key Concepts

Collective authenticity

- Whereas the authenticity of individual records can be partly established by their metadata, the description constitutes a collective attestation of the authenticity of the records and their relationship in the context of the fonds to which the records belong

« Original record », authentic copies

- In a digital system, an « original record » is the first manifestation of a made or received record and, after closing such manifestation, the original no longer exists.
- Conceptually, however, records creators can use any reproduction of a record's first manifestation as if it were the record's first manifestation, as long as the reproduction is made in the usual and ordinary course of carrying out business activities and used for such activities.

InterPARES 2 Key Concepts

- **Prospective records** (instructive records, enabling records)
- New taxonomy introduced by InterPARES 2
- Enabling records achieve their purpose in the digital form in which they are stored and, conversely, can not achieve that effect if transformed into human readable formats.
- Enabling records bring up unique preservation challenges as they must be maintained in the systems in which they were created in order to preserve their ability to enable the experiences, interactions, performances or other processes they were intended to generate.

InterPARES 2 Key Concepts

- **Bounded variability**
 - the changes to the form and/or content of a digital record that are limited and controlled by fixed rules, so that the same query, request or interaction always generates the same result.
- **Trusted custodian**
 - preserver that can demonstrate that it has no stake in the content of the records and no reason to alter records under its custody and that it will not allow anybody to alter the records either accidentally or on purpose ;
 - be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill its responsibilities, which should be acquired through formal education in records and archives administration ;
 - establish a trusted preservation system that is capable of ensuring that accurate and authentic copies of the creator's records are acquired and preserved and to this end, documenting the reproduction process and its effects.

The translation project

- Focused on InterPARES 2
 - questions and extends the concepts articulated by InterPARES 1
 - centers on the key concepts of digital archival diplomatics
 - InterPARES 3 still active at the time the translation project was launched
- Partial translation of one of the products of InterPARES 1 : « Lineage of Elements Included in the Template for Analysis (pre-InterPARES) : From Traditional Diplomats to Contemporary Archival Diplomats »

The translation project

- Excerpts from Part I to Part VII (apart from Part VI investigating metadata schemes, bounded to change), focusing on the administration domain.
- Glossary (50 pages) and ontologies
- Several appendices (appendices 2, 19 à 22)
 - synthetic view of the findings of the project
 - conceptualization of these findings (« The Concept of Record in Interactive, Experiential and Dynamic Environments : the View of InterPARES » by Luciana Duranti et Kenneth Thibodeau)
 - guidelines and principles for records creators and preservers

The translation project

- To date, only a few of the several hundred pages produced by the InterPARES Project have been made available in French
- Key constraints
 - Translating from outside
 - « International English »
 - An « InterPARES 2 lexicon » : InterPARES 2 Terminology Database, including a glossary, reflecting the need to establish a common terminology among researchers from various backgrounds and archival traditions.

The translation project

- **Towards a « localizing » translation**
 - reading InterPARES concepts and findings through the French archival tradition lens
 - without betraying the ideas and the intent articulated in the original materials
- **Selected terms**
 - *Preservation* : conservation
 - *Records* : documents d'archives
 - *Chain of preservation* : chaîne archivistique
 - *Creator*: producteur
 - *Created* : produit [*made or received* : créé ou reçu]
 - *record-making* : gestion des documents
 - *long-term preserver* : service d'archives en charge de la conservation définitive...
 - *Documentary form* : forme documentaire

Next steps

- Peer reviewing of the translated materials
- Among the French-speaking archival communities : Switzerland, Belgium, Quebec, France
- Critical editions