

SEMINAR ON DIGITAL ARCHIVES: PRESERVING TO ENSURE ACCESS

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The National Archives is developing the Electronic Records Archives system so as to ensure access to any type of electronic record created anywhere in the U.S. Federal government. The goal is to have ERA authentically preserve and provide access to any kind of electronic record, free from dependency on any specific hardware or software, enabling the National Archives to carry out its mission into the future. In developing the requirements for this system our goals were to overcome technological obsolescence in a manner that preserves demonstrably authentic records; build a dynamic solution that incorporates the expectation of continuing change in information technology and in the records that technology produces; and find ways to take advantage of continuing progress in information technology so as to maintain and improve both performance and customer service.

One of the basic requirements for this system is that it must be based on the OAIS model. Lockheed Martin has begun to design the system and I will show how they have incorporated the OAIS model into their preliminary design. The design also includes the concept of persistent archives, which seeks to tie all the aspects of the electronic record together to ensure persistence over time.

The National Archives has other initiatives that focus on records management and e-Government. These initiatives include Toolkit for Managing Electronic Records, which is available from the NARA website, Records Management Initiatives, Electronic Records Guidance, Targeted Assistance and Records Management Training. Most of these initiatives focus on providing guidance to creating agencies as they deal with the creation of information systems that contain records that the agencies need to conduct their business. A relatively small proportion of these records will be transferred to the National Archives.

Another initiative sponsored by the National Archives brought together in 2005 records management and enterprise architecture stakeholders from 18 Federal agencies,

including NASA, the Department of Defense, to work collaboratively to identify and document seven core records management activities and functional requirements that can be supported by services within an electronic environment, including the services-oriented environment defined in the Federal Enterprise Architecture. The seven records management services are: Record Capture, Provenance, Category, Authenticity, Case File, Disposition, and Reference. This will be continuing and we are looking forward to working with partners to develop the software to perform these services.