

# From Michelangelo to CryptoKitties: Implications of NFTs for Records Management

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## Abstract

Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) are digital files that can represent a variety of objects such as images, audio files, videos, or artworks. In 2019, NARA issued a white paper on blockchain or distributed ledger technology (DLT), describing how the technology works, how it is being used in the federal government, and the potential implications for records management. Blockchain is being utilized for applications such as non-fungible tokens (NFT), cryptocurrency, and smart contracts. The presenters, who are with NARA, wrote a briefing paper, released in April 2024, focusing on the uses of NFTs and its potential impact on federal records management.

NFTs have several applications in the art world: galleries and museums have been exploring selling NFTs as artworks or numbered digital art representations. NFTs might support the certification, authentication, and provenance of digital objects, art, or records since DLT systems are designed to be immutable, transparent, and accountable within specific contexts. Further study is needed to determine if these factors can be used to provide trustworthiness of federal records.

## About the authors:

**Sharmila Bhatia** joined the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in 2001. She is a Senior Program Analyst in the Information Security Oversight Office. She has experience in researching and writing about emerging technologies, electronic formats, archives and records management. She has worked with electronic records for 20 years as a processing and accessioning archivist and has experience with a variety of formats and in multi-stages of the records lifecycle. Before coming to NARA, Sharmila was a reference archivist at the South Carolina Department of Archives & History and a reference librarian at the Richland County Public Library (SC). She has a Master of Arts and a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of South Carolina.

**Kate Kim** joined the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in 2011. She is an Archives Specialist in the Records Management Operation, Office of the Chief Records Officer. Previously, she worked as a processing and accessioning archivist in the Electronic Records division at NARA. Before coming to NARA, Kate was a reference librarian at the Oakland Public Library. She has a Master of Library and Information Science from San Jose State University and is also a Certified Archivist and an SAA Digital Archivist Specialist.

**Markus Most** has spent over 20 years in records and information management positions. He has worked both in and out of the Federal government, including the Executive Office of the President, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation before joining the National Archives in 2007. Markus has held various positions at NARA, but in his current position, he works with Federal agencies to tackle their electronic records challenges and monitors emerging technology for its impact on records and information management.

Markus has a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Maryland and is also a Certified Records Manager.