

In the Pursuit of Archival Accountability: *Positioning Paradata as AI Processual Documentation*

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Abstract

The emergence of artificial intelligence and machine learning tools poses a challenge to archives and records professionals accustomed to understanding and documenting the activities of human agents rather than the often-opaque processes of artificial intelligent agents. While a familiar concept in social science research and digital cultural heritage, paradata has only recently been introduced into the archival realm. In response to the uncertainty around transparency and accountability when employing AI techniques, the InterPARES Trust AI research group launched a study to understand how paradata can be used to describe the unique documentation needs that emerge when information objects are created using such tools. For the purposes of this study, paradata is defined as “information about the procedure(s) and tools used to create and process information resources, along with information about the persons carrying out those procedures.” This presentation will examine challenges posed to accountability, transparency, and impartiality by introducing an unfamiliar nonhuman agent into the creation process.

About the author:

Patricia C. Franks teaches courses in *Enterprise Content Management and Digital Preservation* at San José State University. She is a Certified Archivist, Certified Records Manager, Information Governance Professional, and Certified Information Governance Officer, as well as a member of ARMA International’s Company of Fellows. Franks is a member of the *CIGO Association Board of Directors*, a member of Preservica’s *Digital Preservation Sustainability Council*, and the immediate past president of the National Association of Government Archivists and Records Administrators (NAGARA). Franks is co-editor of the *Encyclopedia of Archival Science* and the *Encyclopedia of Archival Writers, 1515-2015 with Dr. Luciana Duranti* and the *International Directory of National Archives with Dr. Anthony Bernier*. She is sole editor of *The Handbook of Archival Practice* and sole author of the book *Records and Information Management*. Her research interests lie in emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and blockchain distributed ledger technology, and their impact on records management and information governance.