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Please Participate in ERS Membership Survey

At our annual section meeting last August, members of the Electronic Records Section discussed the need for a membership directory and specialty contact list. In response, we created the following membership survey. Once completed, an on-line directory will be publicly available on the ERS website. Please take a few moments to fill out the survey and share your interests and expertise with your colleagues. The survey consists of four sections--Contact Information, Areas of Specialization, Areas of Interest, and Professional Membership.

New Online Discussion Group

The SAA Electronic Records section has a new unmoderated online discussion group through Yahoo! Groups (formerly eGroups). This forum, suggested during the section meeting in Denver, is for the discussion of current electronic records topics and issues of concern to archivists and records managers. It will also help facilitate communication between ER section members working on task forces and committees.

To subscribe to the list, send a blank email (no subject line and no body text) to:
SAA-ERS-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
You will receive a subscription confirmation message. Simply reply to this message to complete your subscription. You will then receive a welcome message with information on how to post messages and how to unsubscribe from the list. As part of keeping the group service free, Yahoo! inserts ads at the bottom of each message. List members can either follow the links or ignore them as they so choose.

While the group is unmoderated, you must be a member of the group in order to post or read messages. Membership is not limited to members of SAA so please encourage others who are interested in electronic recordkeeping to join the group as well. All messages are archived and can be accessed by members through the website's URL: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SAA-ERS

To access the group site, you will need a Yahoo! ID and password. Visit the Yahoo! Groups main page (http://groups.yahoo.com) for more information on obtaining an ID. This ID is only for logging into the website. All messages go to the email you specified when you subscribed. At this time, attachments to postings will automatically be discarded in order to control for viruses. If you have a file that you would like to have posted to the group, please send it to one of the moderators who will post it to the group's file section.

There are some great features beyond posting messages that we hope to utilize in the future. Some of these features include sections to store links and files, polling, and a chat room. We will provide more details on these features to group members as we begin to use them. If you have any questions or problems subscribing to the group, please contact Rosemary Pleva Flynn at rapleva@indiana.edu.

Indiana University Electronic Records Project, Phase II

The Indiana University Archives began the second phase of its Electronic Records Project in February 2000 with a two-year continuation grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). Philip Bantin, University Archivist, is the director of the current project, and Rosemary Pleva Flynn was hired as the Electronic Records Project Archivist. The Indiana University Electronic Records Project is primarily an implementation project designed to develop a strategy and methodology for incorporating recordkeeping requirements into IU¬s transaction processing and information systems. Questions being asked by project staff include: Will traditional methods for identifying, appraising, describing records still have value in managing electronic records, or will we have to significantly change the way we do business? What new skills will be needed? What changes need to be made to transaction process systems to make them function effectively as recordkeeping

systems? How does one insert the archives program into the process for designing, analyzing, and auditing electronic information systems on the IU campus? Who are an archivist¬s strongest allies in the management of electronic records, and which issues will resonate with these partners?

One of the exciting projects underway is the creation of MyIU, a web-based portal that will provide a unified front end to IU¬s traditional transaction processing systems as well as the PeopleSoft human resources management and student information modules that are currently being implemented. Project personnel have been working closely with the MyIU team as they gathered requirements to ensure that the recordkeeping requirements necessary to capture and manage reliable and authentic records are included in the system design. The portal¬s infrastructure, known as EDEN (Enterprise Development Environment), will include a workflow engine that will be used to handle the routing and approval of electronic documents created by these information systems. Project personnel believe that this workflow engine can be utilized to capture documents that have been determined to have record status and transfer them to a recordkeeping environment where they can be managed.

In addition to work on the MyIU/EDEN portal, during the first six months of the project the staff have been actively involved in three other projects. They have teamed with IU¬s Internal Audit Department to conduct audits of automated systems in several administrative units of the University. In these audits, the primary goal and contribution of the Archives staff has been to review the systems in terms of their ability to capture, manage and preserve records. The project staff have also been actively involved in the identification, review and selection of enterprise-wide document management software. Again, the major contributions of project staff have been to ensure that recordkeeping requirements were included in the RFP, and that vendors bidding on the project met these recordkeeping specifications. Finally, they have been generating policies and requirements statements related to the management of records and other digital objects. To date, the staff have created a draft e-mail policy, a draft imaging policy, and revised lists of recordkeeping requirements and of metadata specifications. For more information about the project, please see the project¬s new website at http://www.indiana.edu/~libarch/ER, or send email to Philip Bantin, the project director, at bantin@indiana.edu, or Rosemary Pleva Flynn, the project archivist, at rapleva@indiana.edu.

Michigan's Records Management Application

The State of Michigan has initiated a pilot project to test a Records Management Application. The challenge of managing electronic records prompted the Records and Forms Management Division, of the Department of Management and Budget, and the State Archives of Michigan, of the Department of State to collaborate on a pilot project Records Management Application Project, that is funded by a National Historical Publications and Records Commission Grant (NHPRC). The RMA pilot project began May 1, 2000 and will continue for two years.

The software chosen for the project is Provenance's ForeMost Enterprise. This Records Management Application will be tested at two sites within the Department of Management and Budget. In the initial year of the project, the Office of Support Services will use the RMA to classify and manage their electronic records. This phase of the project will focus on the end users experience classifying and storing records. Also the software will be evaluated for its effectiveness in applying retention schedules. The Director's office will be added to the project in the second year. The project will also focus on the RMA's ability to identify and segregate archival records in the second year.

Please visit their website at www.state.mi.us/dmb/oss/rfmd/rma/index.htm for all the latest news on this project.

Report from ECURE 2000

Record keeping systems are becoming more sophisticated, and records are becoming more complex. Yet, at the same time, changes in technology are causing college administrators, archivists and records managers to take a new look at fundamental issues. This idea was one connecting thread running through the recent ECURE 2000 Conference on Preservation and Access for Electronic University and College Records. Indeed, several conference presenters encouraged their listeners to rethink the most basic question, "What is a record?"

The annual conference is sponsored by Arizona State University, and was held October 5 and 6, 2000. It opened with keynote speaker Clifford A. Lynch, executive director of the Coalition for Networked Information, describing the blizzard of new data descending on archivists. Soon, video recording of classroom lectures may be as easy as turning on a wall switch, Lynch said. Already available are dynamic Web sites, online course catalogs and "smart" buildings capable of recording telemetry data about the movements of their occupants. As a result, old categories are being shattered, and static definitions are becoming fluid. Administrators will need to begin to think of records

management in institution-wide terms. Record creation and record keeping. will need to be considered together, rather than separately, in this dialogue.

Though Y2K is behind us, computer system architecture will continue to be of concern. In many ways, the discussion about records management issues will be nearly indistinguishable from the discussion about what the networked computing environment will be Lynch said. In addition, "it is high time for really serious dialogue with the producers of those systems about what our requirements are (regarding storage and obsolescence)," he said. A recording of Dr. Lynch¬s presentation will be videostreamed through the ECURE website at a later date.

John T. Phillips of Information Technology Decisions, noted that documents themselves now contain an assortment of information objects embedded in them, and are becoming "virtual records." The development of extranets between institutions means that a record may have multiple contributors located on different computing systems.

Wendy Duff, Assistant Professor with the University of Toronto Faculty of Information Studies, provided "An Introduction to Metadata." She examined the historical perspective and examples such as MEX2, Dublin Core, Resource Description Framework, XML (extensible markup language), and other emerging standards and structures.

To address organizational change, Phillip C. Bantin, Indiana University Archivist and Project Director, gave an update on the Indiana University Electronic Recordkeeping Project. Bantin described a management model that includes an Information/Records Management Office, and steering committees made of senior officials and data stewards. To be effective, records managers and archivists will need to acquire skills in information systems analysis and design, Bantin said. They will need the ability to create conceptual models for representing records and system requirements. He recommended that records professionals increase their understanding of metadata systems, such as data dictionaries, information resource dictionary systems, and transaction logs. They can become more familiar with how automated systems process data. Bantin gave as examples Transaction Processing Systems (TPS), Database Management Systems (DBMS), Management Information Systems (MIS), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software, Decision Support Systems (DSS), Data Warehouses, and Electronic Document Management Systems (EDMS).

Though academic institutions produce records similar to those used in industry, they also produce many kinds of records with special characteristics. Jeremy Rowe, Head of Media Development for Arizona State University, and Nancy Tribbensee, Deputy General Counsel of the Office of General Counsel at Arizona State, discussed electronically enhanced courses. Knowing "what not to do" when planning these courses is often the most important planning skill, they said. Technical problems can involve standard technology issues, such as security, privacy, software standards, file organization, disaster recovery, and back-up. However, there are also issues which are specific to course development. These include licensing vs. ownership, permissions, course management, copyrights, and instructional design. Accommodations must also be made for existing institutional policies, like grade books, course records, and the replicability of materials for grievances and appeals.

Among the other conference presentations were discussions of how existing laws such as FERPA (Family Educational Records Policies Act) and FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) apply to digital records and e-mail. Online portal sites, and creating computer use policies, were also examined.

The conference website at http://www.asu.edu/it/events/ecure/ is being updated with presentation slides and outlines. Plans are underway for hosting ECURE 2001 next fall, according to conference co-chair Rob Spindler. "We believe ECURE is helping to increase recognition that effective recordkeeping is essential, and that many professions bring necessary skills to the system design table," Spindler said.

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